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THE SANSIS OF PUNJAB

A GYPSY AND DENOTIFIED TRIBE OF RAJPUT ORIGI

SHER SINGH 'SHER'

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THE SANSIS

OF

PUNJAB

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THE SANSIS OF PUNJAB

(A Gypsy and De-notified Tribe of Rajput Origin)

by

SHER SINGH "SHER"

MUNSHIRAM MANOHARLAL
Oriental Publishers & Booksellers
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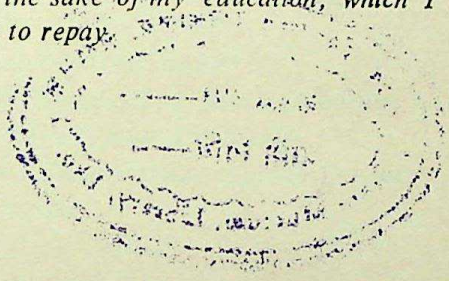
Dedicated to my respected father Sardar Asa Singh and my mother Sardar Kaur, for their hard work and sacrifices for the sake of my education, which I will never be able to repay.



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INTRODUCTION

NORTH INDIA's nomadic castes—often branded in the past by an unimaginative administration as 'Criminal Tribes' now called Denotified Tribes—have so far received little attention by anthropologists and sociologists. Mr. Sher Singh "Sher" has, therefore, undertaken a creditable task by studying in detail one of the most important castes in Northern India, the Sansis. It is well known, and he explains also the dearth of studies of these castes, that they, and specially the Sansis, are not easily accessible to the probings into their past and present by students of anthropology and sociology. The author, however, was able to break down their barrier of suspicion and to gain their confidence to such an extent that they not only answered all his questions, but even allowed him to take anthropological measurements and blood-tests.

The work of Mr. Sher Singh "Sher" brings out many important and significant facts in the cultural life of the Sansis. First of all, he emphasises that the fact of their being branded with the designation of "Criminal Tribe" had very tragical consequences for the community as a whole and placed them at the mercy of often very unsympathetic and exploiting officials. Instead of weaning the real criminals among them from a life of petty thieving, it often drove, by despair of wounded feelings, innocent members of the community into a life of serious crime. Fortunately, little time was lost when India gained her independence and the unfair and unjust Criminal Tribes Act was rescinded by the new Indian Government in 1952. The Sansis and similar "Denotified Tribes" are now on a fair way of being rehabilitated in Indian society and, since the stigma of their criminal character is removed from them, they quickly allow themselves to be assimilated and incorporated by the new national culture which is developing in India. In a short time all traces of their old ways of living will be obliterated and the very existence of "Denotified Tribes" in India will be lost to memory. This is to the best of the Sansis and similar castes, no doubt ; though anthropologists and sociologists would wish that these changes do not take place so rapidly before they are put to record as historical facts.

Mr. Sher Singh "Sher" 's monograph on the Sansis is con-

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sequently the more valuable because he has done for science what has been delayed for so long and may never be done for many of the other castes once placed under the Criminal Tribes Act. Still there is hope that other field workers may come forward and study scientifically the castes and tribes of this particular type before it is too late and they have changed beyond all recognition. A good number of young and able anthropologists and sociologists are growing up at the Indian universities who should be eager to prove their worth by studying these castes in the field.

The author claims, and it seems for good reasons, that the Sansis are originally Rajputs who were dispossessed of their lands in Rajasthan by the Muslim invaders in the 13th century and subsequently could not find any place where to settle down to their accustomed way of living. They continued to roam about in Northern India, eking out a miserable livelihood as pastoralists, as field-servants and genealogists of the landowning Jats. Their nomadic habits and occasional indulgence in petty thieving, cattle-lifting etc. made them suspect to the British Officials, who, in those very troubled times after the 'Mutiny', took strenuous efforts to restore India to internal peace and to a semblance of order and lawfulness. The Sansis, as "Vagrants", unfortunately fell under the category of "Criminal Castes" and were treated as such. The author has proved that the Sansis were not aboriginals who refused to be 'uplifted', as was claimed by the older generation of anthropologists and administrative officials, but Rajputs who by losing their homelands had also lost their social and economic equilibrium. Instead of being treated as "Lawless savages" who refused to be "acculturated" and "civilised", the grievances of the Sansis should have been redressed and their homelands restored to them.

The author has argued his case convincingly in pointing out that the Sansis are not an aboriginal tribe, but of Rajput origin as his anthropological data clearly prove. The Sansis, as he shows, are not only fully Hinduised in their religion (though many have in recent times embraced the Sikh religion), but they also lack other typical traits of aboriginal culture, like totemism, a tribal social organisation and a specific tribal world-outlook. Only their economic life is retarded; but this can be fully explained as the author does point out correctly, by a political catastrophe, their defeats in the Moghul wars and subsequent dispossession of their homelands.

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While during the long years of their aimless wanderings the Sansis may have discarded many customs and usages of the Rajputs, they seem to have retained quite a few, on the other hand, which have disappeared from Rajput communities who continued their undisturbed living in their original homeland. It is found for instance, that the position of women is better in Sansi society than in traditional Rajput Hindu society. All women can inherit property ; she can divorce her husband and remarry ; she can bear witness in the caste council and may even speak up and give her advice in the same council ; things of which the Rajput women would never have dreamed in the past. Sansi Society discourages polygamy and permits it only in the form of the levirate and sororate. The custom of paying a bride-price is frowned upon by the Sansis. These are all traits which prove the almost equal position which a Sansi woman shares with the man.

The author is justified and his vast study of Sansi history and culture entitles him also to give definite suggestions and advice to social workers for the uplift of the Community. Government officials as well as social workers would do well to study his questions and to accept his advice for there can be few who know the Sansis so intimately and fully as the author of this present book does.

DR. STEPHEN FUCHS, PH.D.

Alxingergasse 6,
Vienna X, Austria.

22 November 1959

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FOREWORD

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Sansis of Punjab* by Sher Singh "Sher". It is a comprehensive and fascinating treatise of considerable importance. It is exceptionally well written. The author has collected an unusually large amount of data, of historical as well as of sociological and anthropological value.

As a human geneticist, I find his blood group and anthropometric comparisons of the Sansis with other Indo-Aryan communities especially interesting. His interpretations are logical and sound.

I believe that many people will be interested in reading it. The book should also serve as a valuable reference for students.

I wish to congratulate Mr. Sher Singh "Sher" for his outstanding research.

DR. DAVID C. RIFE, PH. D.

Deputy Scientific Attache,
American Embassy, New Delhi.

4 October 1960

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PROEM

I have read with interest the manuscript of the book entitled *The Sansis of Punjab*. I note that this tribal people has long been neglected by students of Indian society and this is the first comprehensive study of the Sansis. It is a sociological, anthropological and economical study. It is even more, since it has a chapter on their political life also. It is a great and praiseworthy work as it has opened a new path in Indian Sociology and Anthropology.

What impresses me most is the deep concern of the author with social justice for the Sansis. He has shown the harm done to these people by the Criminal Tribes Act in stigmatizing the entire community as criminal and has set forth, in his concluding chapter, a series of very useful suggestions aiming at the improvement of the community. This is a unique social research in the interest of social reform and I hope it will be widely read.

DR. M.F. NIMKOFF, PH., D.

Professor and Head of Department of Sociology,
Florida State University, U.S.A.

6 January 1962

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The Punjab, the land of five rivers is an excellent representative of the ancient culture and civilization of India. Her people are the best representatives of the original Aryans who came to India and first settled in the Punjab. But a study of Indian Anthropology, Sociology, History, Econometry and Raciology shows that the people of Punjab have been hitherto neglected. There is no anthropological and sociological research institute in the Punjab. The Punjabi scholars as yet have not shown any interest in their ancient and original culture. Other Indian anthropologists and sociologists have also paid no attention to the study of Punjabi people. Wilson, Cunningham, Latham, Elliot, Tupper, Ibbettson, Griffin, Mohammad Latif and Rose have tried to describe the people of the Punjab but it is not possible for an author of a compendium to study completely a tribe or a caste within a note or an article limited by space, knowledge, purpose and scope.

There is not even a single tribe or caste of the Punjab on which any monograph is available. The importance of the study of Punjab increases due to another factor—if a study of the tribals of western, central, north-eastern and southern parts of India, reveals its non-Aryan culture, ethnology and civilization, the study of the tribes and castes of Punjab mirrors the Aryan culture in its best possible, traceable and available form. As Ibbettson observes about the Punjab, "nor are its inhabitants less diverse than its physical aspects. It does not indeed contain any of the aboriginal tribes of India; at least in primitive barbarism, and its people in common with those of neighbouring provinces include the peaceful descendants of the old Rajput rulers of the country....."[1]

Ibbettson wrote this in 1881, but even today, after 84 years, the field of the study of the people of Punjab, is virgin and full of promise. With this view, I have undertaken and completed this research, *The Sansis of Punjab,* who are thought to represent ancient Punjabi culture. They happen to be also one of the denotified tribes of India on whom nobody has written anything authentic. So this work will blaze the trail of research in two ways—(i)

[1] Ibbettson, *Punjab Ethnography*, p. 1.

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it will be the first work of its type on the de-notified Tribes of India, and (ii) it will also be the first work of its type on the people of Punjab. Hence this research will be of equal interest to sociologists, economists, historians, criminologists, ethnologists, anthropologists and administrators. I have also made a detailed and critical study of the Criminal Tribes Act dealing with its history, background, justification, working, impact and repeal.

My difficulty has been enhanced by the partition of the Punjab as some of the important published literature which was available on the Sansis and other de-notified tribes of this province, has been left in the Punjab University, Lahore, and in C.I.D. and police offices in the West Punjab. Another peculiar puzzle in the way of the study of de-notified tribes, is that whatever good or bad was written on them, a century or so ago, is not available, because such literature was kept confidential by the British rulers and it was meant only for the Police officers, C.I.D. personnel and some other administrators.

In this anthropological study of the Sansis of Punjab, it is my attempt to give an authentic account of this neglected ethnic group. The Sansis are an extremely interesting people. The scope of the study is fairly exhaustive. I have attempted to describe every important aspect of the life of the Sansis. Some of the problems might have been left unsolved owing to the fact that their comprehensive treatment requires the help of similar monographs on some other ethnic groups of Punjab. An enlightened study of anthropology, economy, ethnology and sociology can go a long way in cementing the social unity and mutual understanding of different groups of the Indian People.

The Sansis and other allied de-notified tribes of Northern India were considered to be aborgines, and this view was held by some English writers who were neither sociologists nor anthropologists. They were simply administrators and for the sake of the aggrandizement of their Empire and its administration, they branded some poor, wandering and homeless people of India, as aborigines and born criminals. But today it is getting clearer and clearer that the aborigines proper are not found in the Punjab. By systematic study, now it is believed that the de-notified Tribes of Northern India are not aboriginals, but Hindus from the Indo-Aryan stock. This is clear from the anthropological characters of the Sansis studied in this recearch work.

Even before the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act and more so after its repeal, the National Government of India has been

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spending millions of rupees on the welfare and uplift of the neglected people of this country. But it is sad to say that money, time and energy are not doing the good to the extent to which they can actually do to this people. For the full benefit of the money spent by the Government, a comprehensive knowledge of the life and living of this ethnic group is essential. So by a proper knowledge of these people we should own them so that they may feel their responsibilities and rights of democracy. We wish that they should no more be criminals, but become noble and useful citizens of India. The Sansis, it is claimed, are the original stock from which several de-notified tribes of the Northern India have descended. This is an additional importance of this detailed study.

In order to collect data about the Sansis both the direct and the indirect methods are used. In many indirect methods I have studied the previous literature including the census reports of India from 1855 to 1961. I have also discussed personally or through correspondence, different problems of the Sansis with some Indian and Foreign Sociologists and Anthropologists. Some of them gave useful suggestions.

By way of direct method I have passed ample time with the Sansis attending their joyous, obsequial and other social rites in order to know their social life. In this connection I toured over the whole of the Punjab for several years and collected information at first hand. Besides Punjab I also toured in some other provinces of India where the Sansis are found and I interviewed with many Sansis of Rajasthan, Central India, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bombay in order to collect maximum information about the Sansis.

The greatest difficulty in collecting data, is that the Sansis are not usually found in collective settlements in the Punjab. In the Punjab, the Sansis are scattered from village to village and it is very rare to find more than one or two families in a village. In some of the villages they are not found at all. The other difficulty is the legacy of their past treatment under the Criminal Tribes Act which has frightened them to such an extent that it is very difficult to get correct information from them. Some of them still view strangers and educated persons with suspicion. So labouring under some past fears, they do not tell the real facts. Therefore this work is a result of these laborious investigations evaluated in the light of ethnology in general and Indian ethnography in particular.

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My research on the Sansi ancestry of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was published in various journals before appearing in the book form. Some of the caste-ridden people have given some verbal lukewarm remarks about it. Some of the scholars and particularly the Sikhs have tried to ignore this historical fact, because the Jats have been claiming that Ranjit Singh was a Jat. As it has already been explained, the Sindanwalias concocted some stories to camouflage their Sansi ancestry and they tried their best to amalgamate themselves with the Sikh Jats of the Punjab, but still many historians have addressed them as "Jat Sansis". They did so being ashamed of the word "Sansi", because due to some vicissitudes the Sansi community had lost its socio-political status. But the lower socio-political status of a community does neither erase its historical origin nor the members of the inflicted community desist from taking pride in the glory of their great men of the past. For instance the Indians were free at the time of Ashoka but many centuries after and more helplessly slaves they were under the British rulers. But did the slaves and helpless Indians give up feeling proud of the greatness of Ashoka? Not at all. Similarly the Sansis in spite of losing their original position, have always been proud of their greatest representative, Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Sikhism is basically and theoretically a casteless society but it is sad to say that in practice Hindu caste-system does exist among the Sikhs. That is why that some of the people will still try to deny the history of real ancestors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is difficult to understand how, in the opinion of some persons, Ranjit Singh is honourable if called 'Jat' and is lowered if called 'Sansi.' In fact Sikhism condemns the vanity of caste in its very fundamental doctrines because when a Sikh bows or prostrates before the *Guru Granth Sahib* he pays the same homage to his Gurus as he does to Ramdas the cobbler, Kabir the weaver and Namdev the washerman, as writings of these Bhagats along with many others like them are enshrined in the same *Granth*. Therefore the unfounded orthodoxy does not behove the Sikhs. Hence it will be injustice if Ranjit Singh is ignored in an exhaustive treatise on the Sansis of Punjab to whom he actually belonged and accordingly the chapter, "Maharaja Ranjit Singh—The Most Glorious Sansi", reveals the truth of the origin of the family of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, supported by his genealogy which approximately goes back to A.D. 640, 829 years before the birth of Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion.

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I owe a deep sense of gratitude to the librarians of the following libraries :
1. National Archives, Government of India, New Delhi; 2. Central Library of Asiatic Society of Bombay, Bombay; 3. University Library, Bombay; 4. U.S.A. Information Library, Bombay; 5. National Library, Calcutta; 6. People's Library, Bombay; 7. Petit Library, Bombay; 8. British Council Library, Bombay; 9. Hardinge Municipal Public Library, Delhi; 10. Public Library, Jaipur; 11. British Council Library, New Delhi; 12. Central Secretariat Library, Government of India, New Delhi. 13. Municipal Library, Amritsar; 14. Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar; 15. Central Archaeological Library, New Delhi.

I am highly obliged to some Indian and foreign scholars who offered valuable suggestions and comments by personal discussions or through correspondence. Dr. Stephen Fuchs (Vienna), Dr. David C. Rife of American Embassy in India, and Dr. M.F. Nimkoff, Head of Department of Sociology, Florida State University, U.S.A. deserve my special thanks. I am also obliged to Dr. L.D. Sanghvi, and his assistants who investigated the blood samples. I am highly obliged to Dr. J.S. Kalgutkar of Anatomy Department, G.S. Medical College, Bombay, for his assistance to me to study in the college laboratory, the human skeleton in connection with anthropometry. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Vijinder Kumar Bhalla and Mr. Darshan Singh, the then post-graduate students of Anthropology, Delhi University, who worked with me in taking anthropometric measurements of Sansis. I also owe my thanks to Kanwar Surjeet Singh for his assistance. I am indebted to all the authors whose books have been read or quoted by me. I must pay my gratitude to all the members of Sansi community, who donated their blood samples and who submitted to anthropometric measurements. I owe special thanks to Sardar Nihal Singh, the Granthi of the Gurdwara of the Sansi colony of Kasturba Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi, without whose help the difficulties in getting anthropometric measurements and blood samples, must have multiplied. I am grateful to all those members of the Sansi community who allowed me to take their photographs for using them in this book. It is not possible to name all the persons who have helped in the completion of this study but I owe my indebtedness to all who may not have been mentioned.

New Delhi
11 September, 1965

SHER SINGH "SHER"

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SANSIS

"There is nothing that solidifies and strengthens a nation like reading the nation's history, whether that history is recorded in books or embodied in customs, institutions and monuments."—J. ANDERSON.

THE SANSIS are one of the bravest and most prominent communities of India. They are called Sansis, Saunsis, Sainsis, Sahnsis, Sahsis, Sansiyas, Bhatus or Bhantus, but the designation 'Sansi' is the most prevalent and appropriate of all the terms used for this community. The Sansis derive the name of their community from their Rajput ancestor named Sansi. Sansi is known by two names, Sansi and Sansmal, which are synonymous terms. The Sansis usually call him Raja Sansmal and he is the greatest ancestor-deity worshipped by them. Some writers have described them as aborigines but their claim is not authentic at all because they have expressed their opinions without studying and understanding the history and the traditions of the Sansis but still all of them are concurrent that Sansmal is the progenitor of this tribe which is mostly found in the Punjab.

Sansi had two sons named Mahla and Beehdoo and a daughter named Raslaan. Beehdoo had twelve sons and Mahla had eleven sons and their 23 sons are the founders of the 23 *gotes* or *gotras* of the Sansi tribe. Some writers say that Sansi or Sansmal was a native of Bharatpur but there are several different conjectures about him and the origin of this tribe.

It will be interesting to mention the views of various authors about Sansi and the origin of the Sansi tribe. Some say that the word Sansi is another form of the word *Sahsi* which means 'brave'. Dr. B.S. Bhargwa says that "the word Sansi is usually derived from the Sanskrit word *Svāsa* meaning breath."[1] According to Sleeman[2], Sansmal and Sansi were two brothers. Mr. C.M.

1. B.S. Bhargwa, *The Criminal Tribes*, p. 16. Lucknow, 1949.
2. Sleeman, W.H., *Report on Budhuk alias Bagree Decoits*, p. 252. Calcutta, 1849.

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Seagrin[1], while working as an Inspector-General of Police at Indore in 1906, wrote that Sansi and Sansmal were two Rajput leaders and brothers living in the village of Biyana in Kanjar in Baroli district of the Bharatpur State. Captain Ellis[2], who was an Assistant to the Resident of Gwalior in 1842, wrote that the ancestors of the Sansis resided in Marwar in Ajmer ever since the time of Satyug. One of the accounts of the Sansis describes them as the descendants of Shahpari-Queen[3], the Queen of the wandering spirits who won the favour of god Indra by the perfection of her dancing and became the mother of Sansmal.

The Sansis of the district of Sialkot claim that once a Raja banished his daughter and during her wandering in the jungle she gave birth to a child named Sansi who became the father of Beehdoo and Mahla from whom descended the main 23 *gotes* of the Sansis.[4] The Sansis of Gujarat claim that they are the descendants of Raja Sansmal of Lakhi jungle.[5] According to the Sansis of Jhang they are the descendants of Sansmal and belong to the Rajputs of Western Rajputana.[6] The Sansis of Lahore say that Sansmal was a Raja of Central India and was banished for leprosy.[7]

A legend current in Sialkot states that a Rajput virgin girl became pregnant and was exiled by her parents. A son was born to her in the jungle, and was brought up on wild fruits. He was called Sans Bali (of powerful breath). He used to live in the jungles and rob the wayfarers. His descendants followed his calling.[8]

Another interesting legend related by the Sansis of Gujarat district of Punjab states that the mother of Sansmal was a princess whose father used to rule over Lakhi jungle. One day she was going in a boat when she saw a flower floating in the stream. She caught it and inhaled its perfume and conceived a son. She gave birth to a son who was named as Sansmal.[9]

Some people relate another curious legend that once god

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1. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, *The Criminal Tribes of India*, Book III, p. 24. Madras, 1907.
2. ibid., p. 23.
3. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, Section 593.
4. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of Punjab and North West Frontier Province*, Vol. III, p. 363. Lahore, 1914.
5. ibid., p. 364.
6. ibid.
7. ibid., f.n.
8. ibid.
9. ibid.

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Indra wanted to celebrate a *yajna* which was sacrileged by the demons. At last a war began between the army of Indra and the demons (*rākṣasas*). After great bloodshed, although Indra defeated the demons, yet the bravest man of his army was killed in the battlefield. The astrologers advised Indra to keep the ashes of the dead man secretly preserved in a golden vessel which he did. One day his young daughter happened to see by chance that vessel. Out of curiosity she took a pinch of the ashes and smelt the powder in order to know what it was. Thus by inhaling, some particles entered her body and she conceived a son who was called Sansi or Sansmal, produced by *sans* or breath.

The above mentioned legends and traditions are found in short articles, mostly written by the English Police Officers who did not go into details of the history of the Sansis and other De-notified tribes of India, and the Indian writers just copied their notes. The information about these people was primarily collected for police purposes dealing with the Sansis just as criminals. M. Kennedy who was once the Inspector-General of Police, Bombay, writes in the Preface to his book, "Ethnological and historical details, interesting though no doubt are, have been avoided, of being no practical use to the Police Officers in the discharge of their duties in respect to the detection and prevention of crime."[1] Mr. A.E.M. Lemarchand writes in the Preface to his book, "The object of this book is therefore twofold. To instruct the Policeman in only those details which prove of practical value, and to place them in as logical an order as possible to enable him to apply his knowledge. In view of the above considerations much has been omitted from this book which might be of ethnological or historical interest."[2]

Mr. Mullaly also writes in the Preface to his book, "These notes on the habits and customs of some of the criminal classes of Madras Presidency have been collected at the suggestion of Colonel Porteous, Inspector-General of Police, and put in the present form in the hope that they may prove of some value to police officers...."[3]. Not to speak of comparatively recent writers, even the older authors like Mohammed Abdul Ghafoor[4], Dr.

1. M. Kennedy, *Notes on Criminal Classes*, Preface, p. iii. Bombay, 1908.
2. A.E.M. Lemarchand, *A Guide to Criminal Tribes*, p. ix. Government Press, Nagpur, No. 1539, I.G. of Police 30.9.15—650.
3. Frederick S. Mullaly, *Notes on Criminal Classes*. Madras, 1892.
4. Mohammed Abdul Ghafoor, *A Complete Dictionary of the Terms used by the Criminal Tribes in the Punjab*. Lahore, 1879.

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Leitner[1], Major Gunthorpe[2] and Ibbetson[3] have also described these people with limited understanding.

The socio-economic and legal position of the Sansis along with many other similar communities was lowered after their being put under the Criminal Tribes Act formulated in 1871. Hence whosoever wrote anything on them treated of them only as criminals, describing their modus operandi, dress, habits and habitats. This is why George Mackmunn correctly and justly remarked about them, "They really present a most interesting ethnological problem, and are deserving of much study before an improving and humane Government develops them into the general mass of low-caste men."[4]

Therefore, one has to delve deep into the historical background of the Sansis to do justice to a proper account of them. It is pitiable that no history of these unfortunate people has ever been written seriously which is the purpose of this research work.

A thorough consideration of their legends and traditions shows that Sansi or Sansmal was a Rajput of Rajasthan, generally claimed to be of the territory called Lakhi jungle. Besides their own traditions of their origin, some writers support their Rajput ethnic claim. Ethnically the Rajputs and the Jats also present a very complicated problem and they seem to be the related descendants of the same Indo-Aryan racial stock of Northern India, though it is not yet decided whether Rajput as a separate ethnic group exists or not.

The Sansis claim with strong reasons that they are the Bhatti Rajputs who once flourished in Rajasthan, particularly at Bhatner and its surrounding territories which are what we call Lakhi jungle. It is believed that the Sansis are the original stock and many other De-notified tribes are their off-shoots. The Sansis hate to have any social and matrimonial connection with them and the Chharis are a mere accretion to them, of some other wandering tribes of lower status.

Like most of the Jats of Punjab, the Sansis of Punjab also claim that their ancestors came from Garh Ghazni in Afghanistan. It is an historical truth that Gaj, a Bhatti Rajput, founded Ghazni after being expelled from the Punjab and his descendants again

1. Dr. G.W. Leitner, *A Detailed Analysis of the Criminal Tribes in the Punjab*, 1880.
2. Major Gunthorpe, *Notes on Criminal Tribes*, 1882.
3. Denzil Charles Jelf Ibbetson, *Outline of Punjab Ethnography*. Calcutta, 1883.
4. Sir George Mackmunn, *The Underworld of India*, p. 128.

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came back to the Land of the Five Rivers.

Hari Kishan Kaul and L.L. Tomkins say in their "Report on the Questions relating to the Administration of the Criminal and Wandering Tribes of the Punjab", published by the Punjab Government in 1914 at Simla, "A Sansi ordinarily claims Rajput descent, and this is true enough in a sense, of the parentage of Sansmal and of many a subsequent initiate." Dr. Bhargwa seems to have correctly remarked, "It would not be correct to say that all Sansiyas claiming various *gotras* are descended from Sahsmal for there have been large accretions by the recruitment of outcastes and stray persons from other castes and tribes."[1] However, it is not proper to assert it unless a comparative and comprehensive ethnological and historical research work is done on all of these tribes. One thing is absolutely clear that Bhatus and the Sansis are synonymous terms. The Sansis call themselves Bhatus in their tribal dialect.

The traditions, family genealogies and history of the Sansis strongly support their claim of being Bhatti Rajputs who were expelled from Rajasthan by the Muslim invaders. The accounts of the Sansis of Punjab, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh do not differ regarding the period of the exodus of their ancestors from different places of Rajasthan. Being dispossessed of their homes, their ancestors first migrated to the Punjab where they remained wanderers for several centuries and thence their small groups, clans or deras went to and kept roaming in different parts of India eking out their livelihood by pastoral and predatory activities. Some Sansis of the Punjab remember the traditional history of their ancestors to a very dependable extent, up to their family genealogies. They relate too that their ancestors came from Gajini, Jaselmer, Bhatner and Chitorgarh, etc. It is not easy to assert something historically about a people which has passed through very peculiar and unrecorded vicissitudes. At any rate the account given by the Sansis of the Punjab and especially those of the district of Gujranwala, the birthplace of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, removes uncertainty to a great extent. Their greatest dependable historical record is the history of their greatest descendant, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his close relatives, the Sardars of the Sindhanwalia *misal* (confederacy).

The account of the migration of the Sansis to the Punjab is briefly given below :-

1. B.S. Bhargwa, *The Criminal Tribes*, p. 17. Lucknow, 1949.

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Some Bhatti Rajputs of Rajputana were defeated by Alla-ud-din Khilji in A.D. 1303 and were expelled from there. They went from Rajasthan to North, wandering from place to place for about two centuries till some of them began to settle on land, captured by some of their influential leaders in the vicinity of Sirsa, Hissar, Bhatinda and other parts of Eastern and Southern Punjab. The present descendants of the Rajas of Faridkot, Patiala, Nabha and Jind belong to those Bhatti Rajput ancestors who settled like this and after some generations, as the power and influence grew, founded their respective States owning the caste names of Sidhus and Brars after the names of their latter ancestors who amalgamated themselves with the Jats of the Punjab. Their gradual settlements, advance and influence are authentically described by Sir Lepel Griffin in his book, *Rajas of Punjab*.

This was the time when the Sikh religion had not yet appeared in the Punjab and some destitute groups, *deras* or the camps of the wandering Bhatti Rajputs were moving about in the Punjab. One of their famous leaders was known as Sansi and his consanguine followers were known as Sansis. The name of his father was Padam Rath or simply Padam. Padam had three sons Wichher, Sansi and Bhoni. Wichher and Bhoni had their respective descendants, but here we are concerned only with the descendants of Sansi. The Rajput families which settled in the Punjab succeeded in amalgamating themselves with the Jats of the Punjab and a large majority of them embraced Sikhism.

Although the Rajputs are of a higher social status than the Jats according to Hindu caste-system, yet in the Punjab they enjoy equal status and this is why Baines has rightly said, "The Jat *par excellence* is the peasantry of the Sikh tracts where the tradition of political supremacy is still green, and the Jat has nothing to gain in public estimation from either Brahman, Rajput or Pathan."[1] In Northern India in general and particularly in the Punjab the Jats and the Rajputs are racially so much similar and affinitive that we read, ".... the Northern stock has now been fused, and though the Jat no longer becomes a Rajput, the same tribe is found Rajput in one village and Jat in the next."[2] This ethnological remark of Baines is very authentic and supports the view of Ibbetson who wrote about the Punjab, ".... nor are its inhabitants less diverse than its physical aspects. It does not indeed contain any of the

1. Sir Athelstane Baines, *Ethnography*, p. 43. Strassburg, 1912.
2. ibid.

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aboriginal tribes of India; at least in primitive barbarism and its people in common with those of neighbouring provinces include the peaceful descendants of the old Rajput rulers of the country..."[1]

The bulk of the population of the Punjab is composed of the Jats and most of their castes claim Rajput origin which shows that they fell from the status of Rajputs for adopting the practices of bride-price and widow remarriage which were taboo to the staunch Rajputs but were and are still practised by the Jats of different parts of the Punjab, which have sprung from the Rajput origin and some more important of them are adduced below.

The Aulakh[2] Jats of Majha and Malwa, the Bains[3] Jats of Hoshiarpur, Jullundur and Ambala, the Bajwas[4] of Sialkot, Montgomery and Multan, the Bals[5] of Upper Satluj, Beas and Amritsar, the Chahals[6] of Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Ludhiana and Ambala, the Chhinas[7] of Sialkot and Amritsar, the Chimas[8] of Sialkot and Gujranwala, the Gills[9] of Sialkot, Lahore, Ferozepore and of the Beas and Upper Satluj territories, the Kahlons[10] of Sialkot and Gurdaspur, and the Kharrals[11] of Lyallpore, Montgomery, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala and Jullundur have Rajput descent. Similarly the Randhawas[12] of Amritsar and Gurdaspur, the Ranjhas[13] of Jhelum, Gujrat, Shahpur and Gujranwala, the Rathors[14] of Multan and Montgomery, the Rathi[15] Jats of Rohtak, Delhi, Gurgaon, Karnal and Jind, the Sahis[16] of Sialkot and Gujrat, the Sametahs[17] of the Leiah Tehsil of Mianwali, the Sekhus[18] or Sekhons of Ludhiana, Gurdaspur,

1. Ibbetson, *Punjab Ethnography*, p. 1. 1881.
2. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province*, Vol. II, p. 25. Lahore, 1911.
3. ibid., p. 35.
4. ibid., p. 38.
5. ibid., p. 40.
6. ibid., p. 146.
7. ibid., p. 168.
8. ibid., p. 171.
9. ibid., p. 299.
10. ibid., p. 441.
11. ibid., p. 495.
12. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province*, Vol. III, p. 319. Lahore, 1914.
13. ibid., p. 323.
14. ibid., p. 329.
15. ibid., p. 324.
16. ibid., p. 342.
17. ibid., p. 350.
18. ibid., p. 394.

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Jind and Sangrur, the Sials[1] of Jhang, the Sidhus[2] of the Phulkian families of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot, the Sindhu[3] or Sandhu Jats of Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Lahore, Amritsar and Ambala, the Wattus[4] of Sirsa, Montgomery and Bahawalpur and the Virks[5] of Sheikhupura and Gujranwala now mostly settled in Karnal, Sangrur, Patiala and Ferozepore, all have descended from the Rajputs. Enthoven says in his *Tribes and Castes of Bombay* (Vol. III, p. 400) that Sansis are descendants of some Jat tribe of Scythian origin.

Like the Sansis, one of the most important Punjabi communities, the Sidhus, Randhawas, Ranjhas and Wattus have descended from the Bhatti Rajputs. The next most important communities of Punjab in regard to population and power are the Khatris and Aroras. They are widely distributed, and besides in North-Western India, are found in Afghanistan and Turkistan. They comprise scores of sub-castes and hundreds of clans which cannot be individually mentioned here due to the limitation of space. However, they have also Rajput origin and it can hence be definitely said that the above mentioned remarks of Baines and Ibbetson are fully reliable and racially there is no difference between the highest and the lowest communities of the Punjab.

All this has been related to show further the causes and background which created rather a permanent social separation between the Hindu and the Sikh Sansis. Poverty and destitution are the greatest forces to degrade the position of an individual or a community. A homeless wanderer is looked down upon by the society with suspicious eyes. The wandering Sansis also met the same fate, and were considered degraded, as beggars and robbers, which has happened almost to every people in the world history which has happened to pass through such adverse circumstances.

The different clans or *deras* of the Sansis were roaming from place to place. At that time a Sansi *dera* was moving in the Majha territory, headed by its two leaders Raja and Kirtu. They encamped near Amritsar and the circumstances favoured them to capture a large area of the surrounding territory and to settle on it permanently. Firstly this encampment was called Sansri but when it developed into a regular village it was named as Raja Sansi which

1. ibid., p. 417.
2. ibid., p. 421.
3. ibid., p. 423.
4. ibid., p. 491.
5. ibid., p. 508.

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at present is one of the most well-known towns in the Punjab. Afterwards the descendants of the Sansis of Raja Sansi rose to a great power and they could establish matrimonial relationship with the Jats of the Punjab. Budha Sansi was the first member of this family who became Sikh and was named as Budha Singh. He had two sons, Nodh Singh and Chanda Singh. The descendants of the former were called Sukarchakias, from whom the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh descended and who shifted to the vicinity of Gujranwala and the descendants of the latter were called Sindhanwalias, the present Sardars of Raja Sansi. Excepting these two Sikh families, the rest of the Sansi tribe lived a nomadic life. Therefore, they shirked to acknowledge their relationship with their Sansi brothers and began to be called Jat Sansis instead of simply Sansis and concocted some romantic stories to account for it. In spite of all this we read, "Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the son of Sardar Mahan Singh, the enterprising and unscrupulous leader of the Sukarchakia confederacy and was born in the year 1780. His family was of the Jat Sansi tribe, nearly related to the Sindhanwalias who were, at the time of Ranjit Singh's death, the most powerful of all the Sikh nobles north of the Beas and who still take highest rank in the Punjab although they now number no distinguished men in their ranks. The Sindhanwalias claim, like most other Sikhs, a Rajput descent, but they have also a close connection with the thievish and degraded tribe of Sansis, after which their ancestral home Raja Sansi, five miles from the city of Amritsar, is named."[1] The historic fact of the Sansi ancestry of the Sindhanwalias and Maharaja Ranjit Singh is also supported by Kanaya Lal[2], Lethbridge[3] and Mehta.[4]

About the town of Raja Sansi we again read, "Raja Sansi was founded about the year A.D. 1570 by one Raja, a Jat of the Sansi tribe. Hence the name of the town."[5]

Although the Sindhanwalias invented stories to conceal their ancestral relationship with their Sansi brothers yet history could not be erased and Sir Lepel Griffin, the greatest authority on the Rajas and the Chiefs of the Punjab, writes, "....and from Sansi the Sindhanwalias and the Sansis have a common descent. The Sansis were the thievish and degraded tribe and the house of

1. Sir Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 153. Oxford, 1898.
2. Kanaya Lal, *Tarikh-e-Punjab* (Urdu), p. 117. Lahore, 1881.
3. Lethbridge, *Golden Book of India*, p. 44. London, 1893.
4. M.N. Mehta, *Hind Rajasthan*, Pt. III, p. 5. Baroda, 1896.
5. *District Gazetteer of Amritsar*, p. 78. 1883-84.

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Sindhanwalias naturally feeling ashamed of its Sansi name invented a romantic story to account for it. But the relationship between the nobles and the beggars, does not seem the less certain and if history of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is attentively considered it will appear that much of his policy and many of his actions had the true Sansi complexion."[1]

About the Sansis of Gujranwala, the birthplace of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, it is stated, "this tribe is an offshoot of Bhatti clan and they take their name from one Sansi whose great grandson Udret, eighteen generations ago, came from Bhatner in Rajasthan and adopted a pastoral life in this district."[2]

It had already been stated that Sansi had two sons—Beehdoo and Mahla—who had twelve and eleven sons respectively and the Sansi tribe is divided into two chief divisions which are also called Harar and Nagaha respectively. Harar was the eldest son of Beehdoo and Nagaha was the eldest son of Mahla and the Sansis of the Punjab are descended from these two sons.[3]

The above historical facts can be verified by the genealogies which were procured by the author from Nihal Sansi of Chuharkana whose father named Hara Singh of Padianwala recited them 41 years ago, before the then Deputy Commissioner of Sheikhupura when Sheikhupura was made the District Headquarters in 1922, and when the Sansis of the district were called for the verification of their registered names under the Criminal Tribes Act. The Deputy Commissioner asked him to give him the information of the origin and history of the Sansi community. He recited the genealogy of his family as well as that of the family of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the Sindhanwalia Sardars of Raja Sansi and proved that the Sansis are the Bhatti Rajputs. The names which occur in the genealogies are also recorded by Sayed Mohammed Latif[4], Sir Lepel Griffin[5] and Rose[6], and tally with each other, leaving no doubt in their authenticity and the claim of the Sansis that they are the Bhatti Rajputs. (See Tables A, B & C at the end, for these genealogies). These genealogies show that Harar had two sons Chandu and Udret. The descendants of

1. Sir Lepel Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, Vol. 1, p. 219.
2. *District Gazetteer of Gujranwala*, p. 33. 1883-84.
3. *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, Section 593.
4. Sayed Mohammed Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 335. Calcutta, 1891.
5. Sir Lepel Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, Vol. 1, p. 217.
6. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of Punjab and North West Frontier Province*, Vol. II, p. 105. See genealogy of the Bhattis and also Vol. III, p. 349, for genealogy of the Samil Bhattis.

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Chandu remained homeless wanderers for several centuries whereas the descendants of Udret, Sindhanwalias and Sukarchakias settled much earlier and their ancestor Budha Sansi embraced Sikhism in the end of the 17th century and owing to favourable socio-political circumstances, the two ruling families of the Sikh Sansis became nobles whereas the rest of the Sansi tribe fell to the position of brave robbers, thieves and dacoits, continuing their pastoral and predatory life. The Sansis of the West Punjab settled in the villages long before the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and some of their wandering groups settled after their movements were restricted by the Criminal Tribes Act imposed on them in 1871. A close study and investigations clearly showed that the Sansis of the West Punjab settled much earlier than those of the East Punjab.

The first two genealogies pertain to the descendants of Harar, the eldest son of Beehdoo, though he had twelve sons. Hence the descendants of other eleven sons of Beehdoo and the descendants of the other ten sons of Mahla also wandered about and settled in different parts of Northern India, as and when the circumstances favoured them. It has not been possible to know anything of importance and dependability about their genealogies.

The Indian history clearly records that the Bhattis are the descendants of Lord Krishna, the most well-known representative of the Yadus of Mathura. James Tod, the greatest authority on the history of Rajasthan says about the Bhattis, "In tracing the Yadu Bhatti history, two hypotheses alternately present themselves to our minds, each of which rests upon plausible grounds; one supposing the Bhatti to be of the Scythic, the other of the Hindu origin, incongruity may be reconciled by presuming the co-mixture of the two primitive races by enlarging our views and contemplating the barrier, which in remote ages separated Scythia and India and admitting that the various communities from the Caspian to Ganges, were members of one great family having a common language and common faith in that ancient Empire whose existence has been contended for or denied by first names in Science, the Bharatavarsha of King Bharata the son of Budha the ancestor of the Yadu Bhattis now confined to the nook of a desert."[1] Ibbetson also writes, "The Punjab form of the Rajputana word Bhatti is the title of the great modern

1. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Vol. II, Chap. 1, p. 170. London, 1950.

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representative of the ancient Yadu Bansi Royal Rajput family, descendants of Krishna and therefore of Lunar race."[1]

Hence we conclude that the ancestors of the Sansis were called Yadus of Mathura and the Indo-Aryans of the ancient Northern India. They were Bhatti Rajputs of Rajputana of the medieval age and who knows by what name will they be known to posterity ?

1. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, p. 144. Lahore, 1916.

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CHAPTER TWO

MAHARAJA RANJIT— SINGH THE MOST GLORIOUS SANSI

"Ranjit Singh found the Punjab a wanting confederacy, a prey to the faction of its chiefs, pressed by the Afghans and the Maharattas, and ready to submit to the English supremacy. He consolidated the numerous petty states, he wrested from Kabul fairest of its provinces, and he gave the potent English no cause of interference. He found the Military array of his country, a mass of horsemen, brave indeed but ignorant of war as an art, and he left it mustering fifty thousand disciplined soldiers, fifty thousand well armed yeomanry and militia and more than three hundred pieces of cannon for the field. His rule was founded on the feelings of a people.

—J. D. CUNNINGHAM.

THE HISTORY of the Sansis of the Punjab would remain incomplete without an account of the life and ancestry of the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh who changed the trend of the Indian History in general and that of Punjab in particular. His real ancestry has been camouflaged by the Jats. The Sansis consider it an historical injustice to them as it is universally true that every community takes a pride in owning a member of its own blood who gives prestige, glory and greatness to the country in which it lives.

After their expulsion from Rajasthan different clans of the Sansis kept wandering in different directions and parts of the Punjab. In the course of his wandering, Kalu Sansi (also known as Kalu Bhatti) remained for sometime at Pindi Bhattian but due to some local dispute he had to leave this place and take shelter with the members of his tribe who had encamped at Sansri near Raja Sansi. During his stay with them his wife gave birth to a son who was named as Jaddoman Sansi. After sometime Kalu Sansi migrated to Sand, a village near Wazirabad in the district of Gujranwala, where he died in 1488. Jaddoman passed his whole life among his Sansi brothers and he always accompanied them in their plundering expeditions. He was killed in

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1515[1], while on an excursion with a Sansi gang. Jaddoman's son Galib who was a chip of the old block followed the pursuit of his father. "He successfully headed gangs of Sansi plunderers and carried his depredations into Manjha country."[2] Kiddoh, the son of Galib, shifted first to Kilali and then to Sukarchak in 1555, then a small village three miles from Gujranwala. Kiddoh, unlike his forefathers, was a man of peaceful and God-fearing nature and he never joined the gangs of his tribe. So the Sansis used to call him 'Ramthal' (a man devoted to God). By dint of hard work and thrift he acquired some land at Sukarchak. He died there in 1578[3] leaving behind his two sons, Rajadah and Premu. Premu died young and Rajadah died at Sukarchak in 1620 leaving behind three sons, Telu, Takhatmal and Neeloo. Telu and Neeloo died young. Takhatmal led a peaceful and settled life and died in 1653.[4] Takhatmal had two sons, Balloo and Bara. Balloo joined the gangs of Sansis and died at the young age of eighteen only in a nocturnal encounter with the enemies. Bara was a man of religious bent of mind. He developed great love for Sikhism. The Sikhs of Gujranwala and adjoining villages used to call him Bhai Bara, as *Bhai* (brother) is a very respectable title among the Sikhs. Bhai Bara learnt Gurmukhi and used to read the *Adi Grath*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs. Bhai Bara was pious, hardworking and thrifty and he acquired half of the land of Sukarchak. He died in 1679[5], leaving behind his son Budha who was then only nine years old. Young Budha was ceremoniously baptised and he was the first Sansi to become a Sikh. Sayed Mohammed Latif, one of the noted authorities on the history of the Punjab writes, "Budha was therefore the first man of the family who adopted the Sikh religion. He was, however, not a man of peaceful disposition, as his father and grandfather had been, but was courageous, enterprising and sagacious. He associated himself with the plundering gangs of the Sikhs and Sansis, and accompanied them in their plundering excursions which, however, were confined to carrying away cattle from different districts of south."[6] The daring expeditions of Budha (Budha Singh) made him a leader of the surrounding villages. His

1. Sayed Mohammed Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 336. Calcutta, 1891.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.
5. ibid., p. 337.
6. ibid.

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activities mainly aimed at lifting of herds of cattle which he used to sell near Lahore and Amritsar. He used to ride on his mare which was piebald and was known as Desi. So, being a rider of this, he came to be known as 'Desu'. He was a very strong and brave man. It is said that he had received twenty cuts of sword and nine wounds of matchlock but he sustained them without his physical strength being impaired. In spite of being a highway man, he was kind to the poor and once he returned to a widow her cattle which he had lifted, being unaware that they belonged to that poor woman. It is also said that at the time of returning the cattle to her he did not tell even his name. He died in 1716.[1] His wife was so much grieved at his death that she ran a sword through her heart, and the husband and the wife were cremated together. He left behind him two sons, Nodh Singh and Chanda Singh. From Nodh Singh descended the family of Ranjit Singh and from Chanda Singh sprang the family of the Sindhanwalias. Many Sansis of the districts of Gujranwala and Sheikhupura know their genealogy by heart.

Some of the Sansis had embraced Sikhism and settled near Amritsar. They began to be called Jat Sansis. In 1730 Gulab Singh son of Basoo Sansi of Majitha married his daughter to Nodh Singh and this tie increased the strength, influence and wealth of Nodh Singh. Nodh Singh joined Fazulapuria *misal* which was headed by Kapur Singh (afterwards known as Nawab Kapur Singh in Sikh history who founded the state of Kapurthala), a Jat of Virk tribe. This was a time of great chaos and disorder in the Punjab. The ancestors of most of the present chiefs and rajas of the Punjab were highwaymen and freebooters. In 1747, Nodh Singh encountered some Afghans and received a gunshot wound in the head which disabled him for the rest of his life. He lingered on for five years and died in 1752[2], leaving behind four sons, Charat Singh, Dal Singh, Chet Singh and Mangi Singh. Mangi Singh the youngest adopted a religious life, preached the gospel of Sikhism and died a bachelor. Charat Singh gained great power and was very brave and powerful. In 1752 he collected around him some of his wandering Sansi brothers and began his plundering excursions in the surrounding country. The power of the Sikh misals was rising and Charat Singh was the strongest of them all. Seeing this even Yar Mohammad, a Muslim chief of the village of Kilali, joined the gang of Charat Singh along with his fifteen horsemen. Sardar

1. ibid.
2. ibid., p. 338.

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Milkha Singh of the village of Muraliwala also joined the group of Charat Singh which consisted of 150 armed horsemen. Confident of his power and following, he forcibly captured some villages in the neighbourhood of Gujranwala and thus became the founder of the Sukarchakia *misal* named after the village of Sukarchak. After this, Amir Singh of Gujranwala proved very helpful to the rising power of Charat Singh and history relates, "The Sardar most intimate with Charat Singh was Amir Singh of Gujranwala, the grandson of Sun Nath, a Sansi whose conviction of the truth of Sikh religion induced him to receive Pahal at the advanced age of one hundred years."[1] Amir Singh also organised a separate gang and became very powerful. He had three sons and two daughters, the elder of which he married to Charat Singh in 1756.

An interesting accident took the life of Charat Singh. Ranjit Deo, the Raja of Jammu, deprived his elder son, Brijraj Deo, in favour of his younger son Mian Dalel Singh. Regarding the right of succession, Brijraj Deo requested Charat Singh for help. Charat Singh reached Jammu leading a large army of his soldiers. The rival forces were arrayed on the banks of the Basantar river. Accidentally Charat Singh was killed with the shot of one of his own followers and thus he died in 1774. Charat Singh was a very brave and prudent person. History tells us that before his death he had captured many large territories of the Punjab which yielded him three lakhs of rupees annually. Latif describes Charat Singh in these words: "He appeared early in the field as an enterprising leader and soon rose from a common *dharwi* or highway robber to the Sardari of confederacy and contributed materially to the strength of the Sikhs as a nation."[2]

Charat Singh was succeeded by Mahan Singh who surpassed even his father in bravery and aggrandizement of his territory. Mahan Singh was married to the daughter of Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind. As Jind is in Malwa, the wife of Mahan Singh was known in Sikh history as Mai Malwain (the Malwa mother) to whom was born the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh was born on 2 November, 1780, the day on which his father was engaged in a battle against Peer Mohammad Chatha, the Chief of Rasool Nagar (now known as Ram Nagar). Just at the time of capturing this town he received the news of the birth of his son. He named him Ranjit Singh, '*Ran*—battle, *jit*—victory, *Singh*—Lion,' the Lion who wins the Battle. The child proved true to his name and now indeed

1. ibid.
   ibid., p. 340

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history remembers him as 'Sher-e-Punjab' (Lion of the Punjab). He was seriously afflicted with smallpox in his infancy, which disfigured his face and snatched his left eye also.

In 1788, the leader of the Bhangi misal died. Mahan Singh supported his younger son Fateh Singh for succession, against the right of his elder son Sahib Singh. So Sahib Singh and Mahan Singh went on war. Sahib Singh shut himself in the fort of Sodhra which was besieged. The siege continued for three months during which Mahan Singh seriously fell sick. Consequently, the siege was raised. Mahan Singh was taken back to Gujranwala where he died in 1792, leaving behind Ranjit Singh an orphan of twelve years. From Ranjit Singh onwards the Sukarchakia misal became unique in power and it is the name of Ranjit Singh for which the misal is famed. Historically, Ranjit Singh's family inherited three different names—Bhatti Rajput, Jat and Sansi, but the fact of the highest renown of Ranjit Singh remains as it is very beautifully said by John Clark Archer, "Who indeed was he whose name this misal bore? He may have been a Jat, a Bhatti Rajput or even a Sansi gypsy—it doesn't matter much for the name is best remembered in connection with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a scion of this house, the most successful of all the misal leaders."[1]

History of the Sikhs or the history of the Punjab is mostly the history of the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He shouldered the responsibilities of his kingdom at a very young age but he had a miraculous prudence, shrewdness and sagacity coupled with bravery by virtue of which he fully felt the pulse of his time. He appeared on the political scene of India at a very chaotic and troubled time. All around him were lying the snares of jealousy, opposition and animosity. The Sikhs themselves were divided into twelve independent and opposed misals or confederacies. The Cis-Sutlej Sikh States of the Punjab were in league with the English against him. Lahore was under the sway of the Afghans, though nominally it was being ruled by the Sardars of the Bhangi misal. His increasing power was an eyesore to all who were aspiring for the aggrandizement of their territories as he was the strongest wedge to split their plans. From the north-east he had to fight against Sansar Chand, the leader of the Dogras of the Punjab hills. He had to face the Gurkhas advancing under the command of Amarsingh Thapa. The

1. John Clark Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 236, Princeton University Press, 1946; Sir Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*; N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power;* Captain Murray's *Ranjit Singh* edited by Prinsep; and especially Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs.*

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English were trying their best to capture every nook and corner of India and the Punjab was the last to be captured. Madhaji Scindia and Jaswant Rao Holkar, the Maratha chiefs, had extended their dominions almost to the borders of the Punjab. The French and the English were using their strategy and strength to oust each other from the soil of India.

The young Ranjit Singh understood that without the internal unification of the Sikh powers nothing could be achieved. So his first move was towards Lahore and he captured it in 1799 and shifted his capital from Gujranwala to Lahore. He strengthened and enlarged his army and subdued his rivals one by one. He welded the divided and antagonistic Sikhs of the Punjab into one nation. He never overrated his own power and realising that his army was inferior to that of the English troops, he employed many European officers including the Irish, the English, the Americans, the Germans, the Spaniards, the Austrians, the Greeks and the Russians who trained his army to great adroity which was admitted by the English also. He had the generals and the ministers from all the three major communities of the Punjab—the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. This is why the Sikh Raj is depicted in history as a secular rule.

He was illiterate like Akbar the Great, but his memory and intuitive power were miraculous. He had a great insight for judging the personality of a man. This was the reason why he selected and partronised ordinary men who after proper experience and training became the strongest pillars of the Sikh Raj. Hari Singh Nalwa, Diwan Sawanmal, General Makhe Khan, Diwan Mohakam Chand, Faqir Azizuddin, Akali Phula Singh, Diwan Chand and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, all were such examples of persons whom he patronised and made great men of the Punjab. He extended his empire from the Jamna to Jamraud and from the border of Sind to Kashmir.

Lord Minto, the then Governor-General of India, made treaty with Ranjit Singh in 1809, through the famous British civilian Metcalfe. By this treaty the river Sutlej was accepted as a boundary between the Sikh Raj and the British empire. Ranjit Singh maintained this treaty till his last breath as history bears it out: "To the end of his life Ranjit Singh observed this treaty which is known as the treaty of Amritsar, honourably."[1] He was a

1. Rawlinson, H G., A *Concise History of Indian People*, P. 296, London 1950; Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, p. 690; Joseph Davy Conningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 131; Sayed Mohammed Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 381.

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very successful ruler of his time and it is said about him, "Brave, scrupulous and far-sighted, it was said that he possessed just the combination of virtues and vices which is best adapted for building up an oriental empire."[1] His greatness has been compared with that of his contemporary Napoleon Bonaparte: "For the first time in the history of India, Indians marched up to the north-western passes of Khyber and dictated the law to people who had for centuries been accustomed to rule over them. They went north beyond the hills and valleys of Kashmir to Ladakh, Baltistan and Tibet. This in itself gives Ranjit Singh a unique place in the history of India, and as a feat of arms rivals that of his European contemporary Napolean Bonaparte."[2]

Scores of foreign visitors and travellers came to Ranjit Singh and they were not only his admirers but also were astonished to see the sagacity of this illiterate king. Lieutenant Burnes writes about Ranjit Singh on his second visit to him on 10 February 1832, "Nor we forget his request, when far from his territories. We received letters from Ranjit Singh himself in the desert of Tartary and in Bokhara. I never quitted the presence of a native of Asia with such impressions as I left this man : without education and without a guide, he conducts all the affairs of his kingdom with surprising energy and vigour and, yet he wields his power with moderation, quite unprecedented in an Eastern Prince."[3] History bears evidence that in whole of his life he never gave death punishment to anybody of his kingdom for civil crimes. During his reign the peasantry of the Punjab was very happy, and trade and agriculture were also prosperous, as Francklin says that the lands under the Sikh rule were cultivated with great assiduity.[4]

He had an unshakable belief in God and his Sikh Gurus. So he always attributed his success to the grace of Gurus. He declared himself Maharaja and Sarkar in 1801 and established a mint at Lahore. He struck his coin with the following inscription on it :

Degho, tegho, fateh, nusrat bedrang,
Yafat uz Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.
'Hospitality, Sword, Victory and Conquest, without fear,
I have got from Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh.'

1. ibid.
2. Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, p. 65., London, 1953.
3. Lieutenant Burnes, *Visit to the Court of Ranjit Singh;* Sayed Mohammed Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 457.
4. Colonel Francklin, *Life of the Shah Alam*, p. 77.

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Although Latif seems to have been influenced by the Sindhanwalias and their concocted stories yet Ranjit's ancestry of nomadic Sansis is self-evident from his detailed account, "..... and henceforward Ranjit Singh, from being the chief of the tribe of roving plunderers, assumed the power and functions of the sovereign of a nation and the title of Maharaja."[1]

In 1819 Maharaja Ranjit Singh married his son Sher Singh to a girl named Desan who was the daughter of Sardar Mohar Singh, Nakai, the Chief of Gugera, district Montgomery. On this auspicious occasion the Maharaja gave donations to many people. He tried his best to confer a Jagir of landed property on the Sansis too, but the Sansis of the villages of Jhabbar, Isharke, Lalke and Chuharkana, then in the district of Gujranwala but now in the district of Sheikhupura, West Punjab, refused to accept it saying, "Maharaj, we cannot accept any donation from you as you are our Sansi brother and an acceptance of a donation from you is below our self-respect because after all we are the descendants of the same Sansi ancestors." Up to this day many Sansis of the district of Gujranwala and Sheikhupura relate this incident with great pride.

The great Maharaja died on 27 June, 1839, at the age of 59 and along with him the fate of the Punjab was sealed. It is a general belief of the Sikhs that Guru Gobind Singh prophesied that the family of the person who would make any memorial on his place of death will be annihilated. Ranjit Singh said that even at the cost of his family's extermination, he would make a magnificent building on the cremation place of Guru Gobind Singh to leave his Guru's memory in the world. So he built the wonderous and beautiful Gurdwara of Hazur Sahib, Nadiad (Hyderabad, Deccan), the death-place of Guru Gobind Singh. Besides Hazur Sahib he also made the present magnificent edifices of Gurdwara Tarn Taran and Golden Temple, Amritsar, rendering an everlasting service to Sikhism.

Now his family is indeed extinct and most of the Sikhs ascribe this extinction to the prophecy of the Guru. In spite of his firm belief in Sikhism, he never declared Sikhism the State religion of the Punjab and respected the temple, the gurdwara and the mosque alike. History tells us that before dying he wished to bequeath the famous diamond Kohinoor to the temple of Jagannath or to the Golden temple, but Misar Beli Ram who was in charge of *toshekhana*, failed to deliver it and Ranjit Singh died with his unfulfilled

1. Latif, p. 353.

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desire.[1]

He realised the inability of his successors and the destiny of the Punjab after him. His farsightedness is proverbial from his one prophetic historical remark. One day the map of India was being explained to him. He asked the significance of the red colour on the map and was accordingly told that the red colour signified the British Empire in India. He paused for a moment and with a long sigh said, "*Ek roz sab lal ho jaiga*"[2] (one day whole of the map will become red). His words came true and just after his death the internal strife of his family and the betrayal of his most trusted Dogra brothers, Lal Singh, Teja Singh and Gulab Singh, mercilessly ruined the Sikh Raj and the English became the masters of the Punjab, about which Hugh Murray writes, "Had the Sikh leaders been as resolutely bent on the defeat and extermination of the opponents as the faithful Khalsa were, it may be well doubted if all the heroism of this isolated division of the British army would have saved it from destruction. But Lal Singh and Teja Singh were both probably in greater dread of their Sikh followers than their British foes and regarded the chances of victory with greater dread than the prospect of a defeat...."[3] Due to the betrayal of the Dogras, the intrigue of the chiefs of Cis-Sutlej Sikh States and especially due to the treachery of the notorious traitor of Sikh history, Pahara Singh, the then chief of Farid Kot State, the Brave Khalsa army was defeated by the English. Tej Singh and Lal Singh did not supply proper and adequate amount of ammunition to the Khalsa army. But even then the Khalsa forces fought so bravely and desperately that the British army fled away defeated. To the great misfortune of the Sikhs, just at that juncture their ammunition was exhausted. Pahara Singh ran after the fleeing English army and told them that the Sikhs had no more ammunition and they simply needed to have courage to return to the battle to win. The well-equipped English soldiers returned and the Khalsa army was utterly routed. There is hardly any Punjabi who has not read or heard the Quissa of Shah Mohammed who was a famous Punjabi poet and who saw the war between the Sikhs and the English with his own eyes. He says :—

Pahara Singh si yaar Farargiyan da, Singhan naal si osdi

1. ibid., p. 493.
2. Majumdar, R. C. and others, *An Advanced History of India*, p. 741. London, 1956; Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, p. 66.
3. Hugh Murray, *History of British India*, pp. 700 & 701. London, 1852.

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ghair sali, Pichhon bhaj Farangi noon jaa miliya, gal jaa dussi sari bhet wali.[1]

'Pahara Singh was opposed to the Sikhs but was an ally of the English.

He ran after the fleeing British army and disclosed the secret to them.'

He further says :—

Aj hove sarkar te mul pave, jehrian Khalse ne teghan marian neen. Shah Mohammeda ikk Sarkar bahjon, faujan jitt ke unt noon harian neen.[2]

'If the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh were alive today, he would have appreciated the valour and bravery of the Khalsa. Oh ! Shah Mohammed, only due to the absence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the victorious Khalsa have been vanquished in the end.'

Rose writes, "The rank and influence of Sindhanwalia family who belong to this tribe, and the renown of their representative, the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh, have given lasting political notoriety to the Sansis."[3]

Although the British Government remained on friendly terms with Mahraja Ranjit Singh, yet they always feared and hated him at heart because they were the foreign usurpers, and in his life time, as a native ruler, he did not allow them to occupy the coveted land of the Punjab. That is why Rose has described his power as, "lasting political notoriety". At any rate according to some prejudiced English writers he earned notoriety as their invincible political rival, but to an impartial historian, he earned an ever-glowing glory which is the heritage and pride of the Sansis as Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the blood and bone of the Sansi tribe.

1. Shah Mohammed, *Qissa Sikhan te Frangiyan di Jang.*
2. ibid.
3. Rose, H.A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab,* Vol. III, p. 379. Lahore, 1914.

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CHAPTER THREE

ETHNIC TRAITS: RACIAL AND CULTURAL

"Pure race was once a fact, but this was long, long ago. Then it became a myth. Of late the myth has been turning into a nightmare, and the time is more than ripe for man to wake up and realize where he stands or who he is."

—A. A. GOLDENWISER.

WE WILL BEGIN the topic of the general physical appearance of Sansis with a few observations made about it by some previous and independent writers. Large changes must have occurred as so much miscegenation has gone on among all the communities in all the countries of the world and the Sansis are no exception to it. We read about the appearance and dress of Sansis : "As a class, Sansis and Berias are of medium build and stature, strong, wiry and agile. Their women are often slender, good looking and well-formed, those of the Berias being of coarser type, dirtier and more untidy."[1]

Some writers have said that the Sansi women used to be tattooed on the chin, arms and wrists, while men on the thighs and arms. But this was found among all the communities of the Punjab and of other provinces. Even today some women of high caste are seen tattooed. Sixty or seventy years ago this practice was common among all people but now we seldom see the practice of tattooing as it is fast disappearing.

Rose says about the Sansis, "The physique of the race is exceptional, and the men are possessed of phenomenal powers of endurance and insensibility to fatigue. Running, walking and general activity are also exceptional."[2] Babu Rajendralal Mitra writes about them, "In agility and hardihood they stand unrivalled. The men are of brownish colour..... but never black. The women are of lighter complexion and generally well-formed, some of them have considerable claim to beauty...."[3]

1. Kennedy, M., *Criminal Classes*, p. 246. Bombay, 1908.
2. Rose, H.A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, p. 378. Lahore, 1914.
3. Mitra, Rajendralal. *The Memoirs of Anthropological Society of London*, Vol. III. London, 1870.

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Mr. C.M. Seagrin who was made the Inspector-General of Police, Indore, in August 1906, wrote, "The Sansi shows good breeding; and the hands and feet, both in men and women are usually small and well-made."[1] Dr. D.N. Majumdar says, ".....fine and aquiline nose is found in plenty among the Bhatus and the Sansiyas.....".[2] He again observes, "The Karwals and the Sansis are often indistinguishable from one another, though the Sansis and the Bhatus are fairer in complexion and possess finer and more leptorrhine noses than the other tribes."[3] The Punjabis are well known among the anthropologists to possess transparent brown colour as Crooke observed, ".....the skin colour is a light transparent brown, 'wheat coloured' as the people themselves describe it."[4] The majority of the Sansis possesses brown or light brown colour.

Anthropological Data

I. *SOMATOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS*

Anthropometric measurements of 25 characters of 100 male adult Sansis of different parts of the Punjab were taken by the author. All the subjects were selected by the random method. The measurements were taken with the assistance of Mr. Vijinder Kumar Bhalla and Mr. Darshan Singh, post-graduate students of Anthropology, Delhi University.

Mean values of 25 Somatometric measurements of 100 adult male Sansis, along with their respective maximum, minimum and range measurements are given below (The figures are in centimetres, excepting weight which is in pounds) :

No.	*Character*	*Mean± (Standard Error)*	*Maximum*	*Minimum*	*Range*
1.	Height Vertex (Stature)	165.72±0.5636	184.0	153.9	30.1
2.	Height Acromium	136.20±0.5973	152.3	117.1	35.2
3.	Height Iliospinale	94.85±0.4541	104.9	85.3	19.6
4.	Sitting Height (Vertex)	84.03±0.3896	90.6	68.9	21.7

1. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, *Criminal Tribes of India*, Book III, p. 20. Madras, 1907.
2. Majumdar, D.N., *Fortunes of Primitive Tribes*, p. 187. Lucknow, 1944.
3. Majumdar, D.N., *Sankhya*, Vol. 9, p. 210. Calcutta, 1949.
4. Crooke, W., *Natives of Northern India*, p. 20. London, 1907.

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No.	*Character*	*Mean± (Standard Error)*	*Maximum*	*Minimum*	*Range*
5.	Sitting Height (Iliocristale)	20.18±0.1729	25.5	15.1	10.4
6.	Biacromial diameter	36.74±0.1694	40.5	31.5	9.0
7.	Chest Breadth	26.08±0.1771	32.5	23.0	9.5
8.	Chest Depth	19.05±0.1623	23.8	16.1	7.7
9.	Chest Girth	82.65±0.2206	96.5	72.0	24.5
10.	Maximum Hip Width	29.19±0.1762	32.4	19.3	13.1
11.	Weight	115.10±1.7950	173.0	95.0	78.0
12.	Head Length	18.79±0.0522	20.2	12.8	7.4
13.	Head Breadth	14.00±0.0544	15.2	12.2	3.0
14.	Min. frontal diameter	10.14±0.0457	11.6	9.3	2.3
15.	Bizygomatic breadth	13.34±0.0581	14.5	9.2	5.3
16.	Nasal length	5.01±0.0370	6.1	4.2	1.9
17.	Nasal breadth	3.61±0.0284	4.4	3.1	1.3
18.	Nasal Depth	2.46±0.0251	2.9	1.4	1.5
19.	Auricular height	12.17±0.0730	14.0	10.4	3.6
20.	Physiognomic facial length	17.74±0.1038	19.6	16.0	3.6
21.	Morphological facial length	11.52±0.0616	13.4	10.2	3.2
22.	Morphological superior facial length	6.56±0.0372	7.5	5.6	1.9
23.	Physiognomic superior facial length	7.12±0.0413	8.0	6.2	1.8
24.	Span	200—24.75±0.6316	40.0	12.3	27.7
25.	Profile angle	82.92±0.3678	95°	76°	19°

Of all the indices of the anthropometric characters, the cephalic index and the nasal index are considered most reliable ethnic characters. Therefore, both these indices are given below along with their observed frequencies :—

Cephalic Index

Average=75.36. Maximum=82.61. Minimum=58.12. Range=24.49.

(a) *Dolichocephalic* :

Class of Cephalic Index	*Frequency Observed per cent*
57—57.9	..
58—58.9	1

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Class of Cephalic Index	*Frequency Observed*	*per cent*
59—59.9	..	
60—60.9	..	
61—61.9	..	
62—62.9	1	
63—63.9	1	
64—64.9	..	
65—65.9	..	
66—66.9	1	
67—67.9	1	
68—68.9	1	
69—69.9	5	
70—70.9	9	
71—71.9	6	
72—72.9	7	
73—73.9	8	
74—74.9	15	
75—75.9	14	
	70	70

(b) *Mesocephalic* :

Class of Cephalic Index	*Frequency Observed*	*per cent*
76—76.9	6	
77—77.9	7	
78—78.9	4	
79—79.9	4	
80—80.9	4	
	25	25

(c) *Brachycephalic* :

81—81.9	2	
82—82.9	3	
83—83.9	..	
84—84.9	..	
85—X	..	
	5	5

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Nasal Index

Average=73.30. Maximum=90.48. Minimum=56.36. Range=34.12.

(a) *Leptorrhine* :

Class of Nasal Index	*Frequency Observed*	*per cent*
52—54.9	..	
55—57.9	1	
58—60.9	2	
61—63.9	3	
64—66.9	15	
67—69.9	28	
	49	49

(b) *Mesorrhine* :

70—72.9	15	
73—75.9	7	
76—78.9	9	
79—81.9	11	
82—84.9	5	
	47	47

(c) *Platyrrhine* :

85—87.9	4	
88—90.9	..	
91—93.9	..	
94—96.9	..	
97—99.9	..	
100—X	—	
	4	4

Among the Sansis 70 per cent are dolichocephalic, 25 per cent mesocephalic and 5 per cent are brachycephalic. Regarding nasal index 49 per cent are leptorrhine, 47 per cent mesorrhine and 4 per cent platyrrhine.

So far as the types of body are concerned, 85 per cent of the persons observed were of athletic type of body, 14 per cent of asthenic or leptosome type of body and only one person was observed to have pyknic type of body. Among 14 asthenic type of persons, one person was observed as a morbid pathinoid type. Although the Sansis are

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well-known to have exceptional stamina, strength and endurance, yet seemingly oligosthenic and eusthenic types of body are rarely met with as generally they have slender and wiry body of medium build and of medium stature. In whole of the population observed no instance of hypoplatic-infantile and eunuchoid type was observed or reported.

No tribe or caste of the Punjab has been studied so far on the above detailed lines. Dr. D.N. Majumdar[1] has studied some Indo-Aryan Communities of U.P., whose anthropometric characters are compared with those of the Sansis below :—

Character	*Sansis*	*Brah-mans (Basti)*	*Brah-mans (Others)*	*Rajputs or Chattris*	*Bhatus*	*Harburas*
1. Stature	165.72	164.51	165.07	163.33	163.38	164.91
2. Sitting Height Vertex	84.03	86.43	86.25	82.25	84.49	85.55
3. Bizygomatic Breadth	13.34	13.34	13.27	13.17	13.35	13.12
4. Head Length	18.79	19.19	19.13	19.26	18.61	18.69
5. Head Breadth	14.00	13.99	13.95	13.87	13.86	13.54
6. Nasal Breadth	3.61	3.65	3.61	3.56	3.56	3.58
7. Nasal Depth	2.46	2.55	2.47	2.47	2.50	2.41
8. Nasal Length	5.01	5.12	5.4	4.27	5.2	5.3
9. Upper Face Length	6.56	6.61	6.53	6.47	6.59	6.46
10. Total Face Length	11.52	11.63	11.63	11.78	11.75	15.5

The above comparison of these characters clearly proves that the Sansis are racially related to these Indo-Aryan Communities. But in spite of this racial affinity, like all other people, the Sansis have also undergone a great deal of miscegenation, and specially so during their nomadic and unsettled life. Scientifically speaking, today no community or group of mankind can boast of its racial purity as miscegenation and intermarriages have affected all the races of man.

II. *SOMATOSCOPIC OBSERVATIONS*

Besides 25 Somatometric measurements, the following 15 Somato-

1. Majumdar, D.N., *Sankhya*, Vol. 9, pts. 2 & 3.

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scopic observations of 100 male adult Sansis were also taken, whose analysis is given :—

1. *Skin Colour* : *(Inside Arm)*

Dark Brown	Light Brown	Mild Brown	Red Brown	Total
24	35	39	02	100

2. *Cheek—Forehead Colour* :

Dark Brown	Light Brown	Mild Brown	Reddish Brown	Total
37	21	40	02	100

3. *Hair Form* :

Straight	Low Waves	Deep Waves	Curly	Frizzy	Woolly	Total
57	41	02	00	00	00	100

4. *Hair Colour* :

Black	Dark Brown	Red-Brown	Brown	Light Brown	Blond	Golden Red	Grey	Total
30	62	05	00	03	00	00	00	100

5. *Hair Whorls* :

Clock-wise	Anti-clockwise	Total
78	22	100

6. *Beard and Moustache* :

Normal	Medium	Thick	Scanty	Total
54	30	03	13	100

7. *Eye Colour* :

Black	Dark Brown	Brown	Light Brown	Grey	Blue-Brown	Grey-Brown	Total
14	86	00	00	00	00	00	100

8. *Eye-Slits* :

Straight	Oblique	Total
99	01	100

9. *Eye-fold (Epicanthus)* :

Absent	Trace	Medium	Marked	Total
100	00	00	00	100

10. *Supra-orbital Ridges* :

Imperceptible	Trace	Moderate	Pronounced	Continuous	Total
52	43	04	01	00	100

11. *Nasion Depression* :

Shallow	Medium	Deep	Total
35	54	11	100

12. *Nasal Bridge* :

Straight	Concave	Convex	Concave-Convex	Total
85	09	05	01	100

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13. *Lips*:

Thin	Medium	Thick	Everted	Total
23	73	04	00	100

14. Eversion is universally absent among the Sansis.
15. Prognathism is also universally absent among the Sansis.

III. *BLOOD GROUPS OF SANSIS*

Blood samples of 131 Sansis belonging to different parts of the Punjab, now settled in Delhi, were collected. The blood samples were taken through finger-pricks. All the samples were sent for investigation to Dr. L.D. Sanghvi, Chief, Human Variation Unit, Indian Cancer Research Centre, Bombay. The blood samples were collected in prescribed and internationally used preservatives. The sealed tubes containing blood samples were put in thermos bottles, containing ice which were also sealed. The blood sent was received at Bombay from Delhi by air within 6 hours after despatch. Some samples were discarded as they were received in a poor condition. Afterwards on the verification of the list of the names of the donors of blood samples, some more samples were discarded because they were repeated from the same families. The rest of the samples were analysed. Statistical analyses of the data were carried out by Sri D.S. Varde. Blood-group investigations were carried out by Dr. H.M. Bhatia and Sri D.S. Varde. The investigations for haemoglobins were accomplished by Sri P.K. Sukumaran. All of the investigations were carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dr. L.D. Sanghvi.

108 samples were examined for sickle cells and found to be negative in all cases. Investigations for abnormal haemoglobin was carried out with electrophoretic technique on 104 samples and showed two with fast moving component, besides adult haemoglobin.

The two samples which showed a fast moving component were found to be of particular importance. The types of their haemoglobins could not be accurately identified in the Research Laboratory of Human Variation Unit, Bombay. Therefore these two samples were sent by Dr. L.D. Sanghvi, for investigation, to Dr. H. Lehmann, M.D., PH.D., SC.D., F.R.I.C., of Saint Bartholomew Hospital, London. He informed Dr. L.D. Sanghvi in his letter dated 6 January, 1959, that due to the paucity and shortage of the samples nothing could be said with certainty. He had, however, mentioned that it seemed to be haemoglobin I, which could be ascertained if another blood sample of BSM (Balwant Singh Manchand) could be sent to him.

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Another 3 c.c. of intravenous blood sample of BSM had been sent and haemoglobin I is established. The discovery of haemoglobin I has been made for the first time from an Indian blood. Haemoglobin I is a rare genetical character, first discovered by Rucknagel in 1955. No clinical manifestations have been associated with it so far. Its geographical and ethnical distribution has not been established completely as only few instances of this haemoglobin have been reported in literature. Therefore, it will remain a curiosity in scientific field till its complete investigation.

As a matter of fact no considerable work on the blood groups of the people of the Punjab has been done so far, though the Anthropologists and Serologists like Dr. D.N. Majumdar, Malone, Lahiri, Macfarlane, Greval, Chandra, Aiyappan, Mitra, I. Karve, Correia, S.S. Sarkar, Chaudhuri, Figueiredo and several others have studied blood groups of different castes and communities of various parts of India.

In this study of blood groups of the Sansis, ABO groups have been studied along with their sub-groups. Besides, ABO, MN and Rh blood groups with their sub-groups have also been investigated. The results of the investigations are given below :

I. ABO

Total No.	A^1	$A^1,^2$	A^2	B	A^1B	A^2B	O	*Total*
Observed	15	3	6	45	4	5	27	105
per cent	14.3	2.9	5.7	42.8	3.8	4.8	25.7	100

p : 0.1865 ; q: 0.3153 ; r : 0.4982 ; p1 : 0.1299 ; p2 : 0.0566

$(CHI)^2$=0.6311 for 1 d.f.

II. MN

Total No.	*M*	*N*	*MN*	*Total*
Observed	25	17	64	106
per cent	23.6	16.0	60.04	100.00

m : 0.5380; n : 0.4620

$(CHI)^2$=4.876 for 1 d.f.

III. Rh

Total No.	R^1R^1	R^1r	R^1R^2	R^2	*Ro*	R_o^u	R^1Rz	*rr*	*Total*
Observed	29	51	6	1	4	2	1	11	105
per cent	27.6	48.6	5.7	0.95	3.8	1.9	0.95	10.5	100.00

$(CHI)^2$=1.6920 for 1.d.f.

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Chromosome Frequencies :

r: 0.3137; R : —; Ro: 0.0887; R1: 0.5256; Rz: 0.0089; R2: 0.0631

There is no caste, community or tribe of the Punjab whose blood groups have been studied on these detailed scientific lines. However, some writers have studied ABO blood groups of some communities which belong to the Indo-Aryan racial stock including gypsies of Hungary, and their comparison is made below with the blood groups of the Sansis, which will enable us to adjudge their mutual racial affinity.

Percentage of ABO blood groups in some of the communities which are racially allied, O, A, B and AB represent pheno-type frequencies and p, q and r represent geno-type frequencies :

Community	*Total No.*	*O*	*A*	*B*	*AB*	*Investigator*
1. Karwals of U.P.	155	25.8	22.6 p:.185	40.6 q:.304	11.8 r:.510	D.N. Majumdar
2. Sansis of Punjab	105	25.7	22.9 p:.186	42.8 q:.315	8.6 r:.498	Sher Singh "Sher"
3. Khatris and Aroras of Punjab	3306	29.6	21.4 p:.169	40.9 q:.295	8.1 r:.536	Swadesh Anand
4. Khatris of Punjab		33.3	25.3 p:.202	30.3 q:.234	11.1 r:.577	Melone and Lahiri
5. Gypsies of Hungary	925	28.5	26.6 p:.208	35.3 q:.265	9.6 r:.534	Gartner
6. Bhatus of U.P.	113	27.6	24.7 p:.181	39.8 q:.280	7.9 r:.538	D.N. Majumdar
7. Sainis of Punjab	200	26.0	28.0 p:.236	32.0 q:.263	14.0 r:.499	Darshan Singh
8. Artisan Castes	126	28.1	22.4 p:.180	40.1 q:.295	9.4 r:.530	D.N. Majumdar
9. Punjabis of Lahore	204	33.3	20.5 p:.215	32.8 q:.252	13.4 r:.531	Boyd
10. Hindus (mixed groups)	1000	31.3	19.0 p:.149	41.2 q:.291	8.5 r:.559	Herschfeld
11. Punjabis of Peshawar	155	29.6	25.8 p:.183	32.8 q:.261	11.8 r:.554	Boyd
12. Jats	277	33.2	24.5 p:.172	35.5 q:.211	6.8 r:.585	Melone and Lahiri

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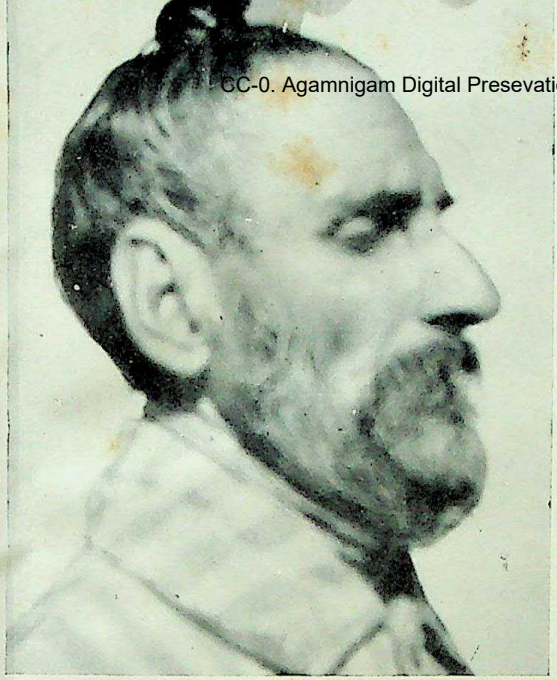

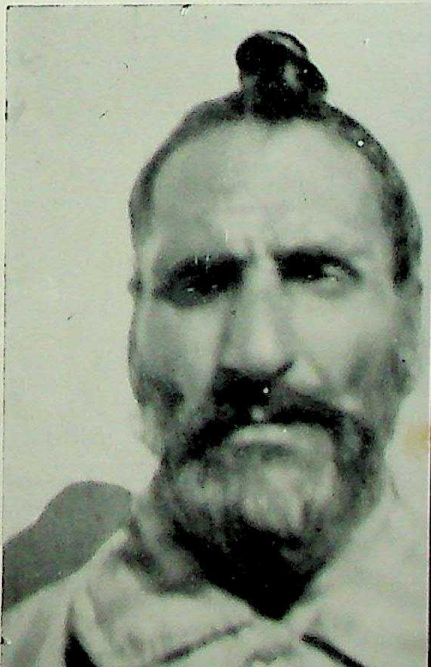

PHYSICAL TYPES OF SANSIS

Face of a middle-aged Sansi
Above. **Profile**
Right. **Front-view**

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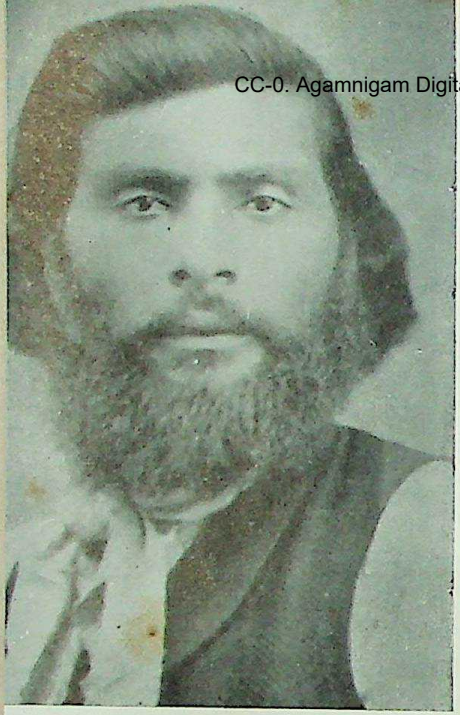

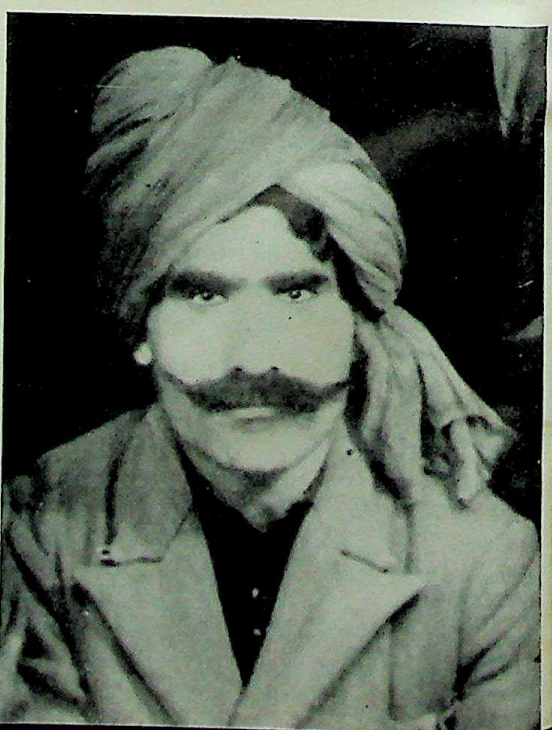

RACIAL RESEMBLANCE

Faces of a European Gypsy *(above)* and a Sansi of Punjab *(right)* juxtaposed. Close racial resemblances may be noted.

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Community	*Total No.*	*O*	*A*	*B*	*AB*	*Investigator*
13. Rajputs	118	28.8	27.9 p:.196	33.3 q:.252	10.0 r:.551	Melone and Lahiri
14. Hindus (mixed)	2357	30.2	24.5 p:.190	37.2 q:.272	8.1 r:.550	Melone and Lahiri

The above comparison of blood group data throws light on the important issue of the racial origin of the Gypsies of Europe, of whom more than half live in Hungary alone and whose blood groups resemble those of many Indo-Aryan communities of Northern India, but are distinct from those of the native European races. Blood group B is very high in India but its percentage is very low in the native European races as is shown in the following table given by Hooton.[1]

Community	*Total No.*	*O*	*A*	*B*	*AB*	*Investigator*
1. Hungary (Budapest)	1000	35.7	43.3 p:.292	15.7 q:.119	5.3 r:.598	Weitzner
2. Rumania (Jassy)	2470	41.4	39.5 p:.256	13.9 q:.100	5.2 r:.644	Jonescv, Jonesce
3. Yugoslavia (Stapar)	408	34.1	40.9 p:.282	19.9 q:.151	5.1 r:.584	Schmidt
4. Russia (Kiev)	4340	33.1	38.7 p:.272	19.3 q:.149	8.9 r.575	Chominski, Shustova
5. Russia (Penza)	4802	33.7	37.0 p:.260	21.4 q:.161	7.9 r:.582	Zebezhinski
6. Italy (Milan)	1500	39.6	40.5 p:.253	10.6 q:.074	3.3 r:.676	Cuboni
7. Spain (Madrid)	1035	43.6	51.2 p:.312	4.0 q:.030	1.1 r:.661	Hoyos Sainz
8. Germany (Berlin)	39174	36.5	42.5 p:.285	14.5 q:.110	6.5 r:.604	Schiff
9. Sweden (Stockholm)	633	37.9	46.1 p:.301	9.5 q:.073	6.5 r:.616	Hesser
10. Norway (North of Oslo)	615	37.9	46.8 p:.304	10.9 q:.083	4.4 r:.616	Host

1. Hooton, E.A., *Up from the Ape*, pp. 548-51. New York, 1958.

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Community	*Total No.*	*O*	*A*	*B*	*AB*	*Investigator*
11. Scotland (Glasgow)	746	49.6	36.6 p:.224	9.5 q:.065	4.3 r:.704	Matta
12. France (Paris)	1265	39.8	42.3 p:.276	11.8 q:.088	6.1 r:.632	Riviere, Kossovitch

The world-famous scholar, Professor J.B.S. Haldane[1] also strongly supports, quoting blood group data, that the Gypsies of Europe are not racially connected with the native races of Europe but they are racially related to the people of Northern India.

On the basis of the above physical data, it is clear that the Sansis belong to the Indo-Aryan racial stock of Northern India.

Cultural Traits

Dress : Dealing with the cultural traits of the Sansis we shall begin with their dress as dress is an important thing which strikes an observer from a distance. In the past most of the Sansis used to grow beards but now the Hindu Sansis shave themselves whereas the Sikh Sansis grow their full beards. Besides some educated young men, all Sansis keep their moustaches intact. The males cut the hair of their head according to the current fashion, but the females keep them with fondness like other Punjabi women as a sign of beauty, braiding them in small braids (*mehdies*) on the head and temples which hang on the back and join near the occipital, in one. The males wear clothes befitting the Punjabi society in which they live. Usually they tie turbans on their heads, though some Hindu Sansis wear Gandhi caps made of Khaddar as they call them, and a few educated Sansis go bare headed also. In Haryana they wear *langir-wali-dhoti*, but in the rest of the Punjab they wear *chaadar* (*lakdi*) like other people of the villages. The educated persons wear pants, knickers and pyjamas. Some of them are also seen in complete European dress, even in neck-ties and hats. Four or five decades ago, some of them were often seen with the turban, a dhoti or *chaadar* round the waist. The children used to remain naked up to the age of four or five years. But now even a small baby sucking at its mother's breasts is seen clothed. The previous conditions

1. Haldane, J.B.S., *Heredity and Politics*, p. 164. London, 1943.

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might be due to poverty and lack of education. The womenfolk are fond of ornaments. Formerly silver ornaments used to be used, but now they try to possess golden ornaments if they can afford them.

The women wear whatever dress is prevalent in the Punjabi society in which they happen to live. But the Sansis of the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur have very strange restrictions on the dress of their fair sex. As a custom, the Sansis used to tie *tragi* (a waist-cord), round the waist of a male child, but now this custom is fast disappearing. Some years before, like other Punjabis the Sansi women used to wear *ghagras*, but now the *salwars* have replaced the *ghagras*. The Sansi women invariably wear *dopatta* over their head as is done by all Punjabi women. In some of the educated and advanced families, the Sansi women commonly use frocks, jumpers, underwears and other suits and garments of modern fashion. The Sansi women are fond of indigenous toilet articles, but in the well-to-do families modern toilet articles are also used.

Their Habits and Disposition : The Sansis were considered to be an untidy people which was unavoidable due to their wandering life, crushing poverty, lack of education, poor knowledge of hygiene and poor food. But in the last twenty years, a great improvement has appeared in their hygienic life. After a close study it is clear that usually the Sansis are a tidy people though some of the families are still in old rut. Poverty had been the root-cause of their dirty living.

As a class the Sansis are very active, sincere and proverbially faithful friends. The Sansis are fond of athletic feats like long-jump, races and other out-door games. The students of this community are very active and intelligent. They are admirably well-up in learning languages, but they shirk mathematics.

Most of the middle-aged and aged Sansis are idlers by nature. This was inevitable and natural to happen because since long they have been living on alms and pittance procured from village Jats by doing petty jobs or on *virt*, like the Brahmans. But the present young generation has renounced this tendency. Some of the Sansis are addicted to gambling. A Sansi feels more happy if engaged in a work that keeps him moving rather than in a sedentary job, however lucrative it may be. The jurists agree that a Sansi is never a mean and cowardly criminal. While committing crime the Sansis do not lose sight of the honour of women and Kennedy writes, "Sansis do not as a rule

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outrage females. Male occupants are forced to disclose where the valuables are hidden.[1] He is fearless and determined when faced by danger, otherwise he is never guilty of violence. When a Sansi is unnecessarily and reasonlessly provoked, he is a most dangerous antagonist.

Hunting is a special hobby of the Sansis though in their wandering life, this was a means of their subsistence. The Sansi youth of both the sexes are very jocular, frank, free, frolicsome and romantic, but their moral sense is not without social control, censure, and chastisement. The Sansis are very fine talkers but they are suspicious of strangers and they are secretive and silent in doubtful situations. They are very intelligent and recite folklore, traditions, tales, legends and genealogies which are centuries old. A Sansi is habitually a man of tireless and industrious nature. The possessive, predatory and plundering urge is an innate instinct of human nature and some of the old Sansis also have thievish mentality which was hardened in them by the Criminal Tribes Act.

Food: The food of a community has close connection with its cultural, religious, superstitious, economic and social life. The Sansi society is in a very rapid transition in the consumption of its food. As a rule, the Sansis are non-vegetarians and we seldom meet a vegetarian Sansi. Excepting a few well-to-do families, the daily diet of a Sansi is just like that of the poor people of the Punjab.

It has already been explained that they were scattered from Rajputana and remained nomadic for a very long time. They led a life of expedition and adventure and passed time in the jungles. They lived entirely on arboreal and animal products, gathering fruits and hunting wild animals. They used to kill the deer, the hare and the wild boar, etc. for their food. Now after settlement, there are very few Sansis who still hunt these animals just for their subsistence. With education, settled life, acculturation, economic condition, hygienic sense, social contact and a wider outlook, they have left this type of adventure. They are very fond of taking ghee, butter, curd and buttermilk. Their habit of taking tea is not regular, but some of them have taken to it.

One of their greatest drawbacks is their addiction to intoxicants. A few of them like opium, but a great majority of them

1. Kennedy, M., *Criminal Classes*, p. 250. Bombay, 1908.

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are victims of liquor which is one of their worst social evils. There is scarcely any auspicious occasion when the Sansis miss the use of liquor. They are not regular rice consumers in the Punjab, but at festivals and weddings they cook rice.

With the exception of a few Hindu and all the Sikh Sansis, all smoke. Women smokers are rarely met with. Like other poor people, they also relish *saag* (pot-herb), cooked leaves of some weeds like *maina, chulai, bathoo*, tender sapling of *pohli* and leaves of *rhye*, mustard and spinach. Some of the advanced families prepare jams and pickles. Onion, garlic and coriander are used with great relish but they are used only by the families which can afford them.

The tastes of these people differ according to the society and the people in which they live. The Sansis of the districts of Karnal, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Hissar are exceedingly fond of sweets like *jalebees, ladoos*, and *mithai*, like the Jats, Brahmans, Gujjars and Tagas of these districts. Some of the Sansis rear fowls and sometimes use their meat and eggs, but only on certain occasions because they cannot afford to eat them as a regular diet. The pig is also consumed by all the Sansis of East Punjab, but beef is a taboo to them according to the Hindu religion. Their spirit of fruit and meat preservation was alive till a decade ago and especially in the West Punjab. One could find dried meat in their houses. They also preserved animal fat which they used to prepare by boiling the lard of animals. The fat prepared in this way is called *bus* by them. They use this *bus* in their earthen lamps or *deevas* for lighting their houses. They also consumed *bus*, applying it to their food as a substitute for ghee. They used to consume *bus* in the winter season and cold nights particularly to get more bodily heat and energy.

As a class they are poor people and so the consumption of market fruits and vegetables is not so common among them. Some poor families consume *sarson* oil instead of ghee and butter, as very few of them can afford to purchase ghee for consumption. Usually they use the milk products of their sheep, goats or cows and buffaloes, if they possess them.

Like the Brahmans and other lagis they also get sweet dishes and chapatis from the houses of Jats, on Sangrand, Sradh, Dewali, Baisakhi and other festivals. If they receive chapatis in abundance they break them into small pieces, dry and preserve for using them afterwards. They boil the dry crumbs of chapatis in water, put *gur* in them and eat as a sweet dish.

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If they get hold of the fish they eat them gladly. According to season they do not lag behind any other rural community of the Punjab in the use of sugarcane, musk-melons and water-melons. Some of them purchase standing crops of musk-melons and water-melons, to market them for getting profit. Those who possess land get these edibles from their own fields.

By daily diet of Sansis, we mean the daily food of a member of an ordinary family as the majority of them is poor. The daily menu of Sansis of the Punjab is described below :—

In the morning they take *lassi* (butter milk) in summer. If they have their own milch animals, then a chapati or a half along with a little of butter will also be consumed along with *lassi* in which a pinch of salt is dissolved. The children are particularly fond of taking stale chapatis in the morning, with curd or butter, if available. Female children are not fed so liberally and fondly as the male children are fed, and it was once a common tendency among the people of the Punjab. In winter, though not regularly, but off and on, they take tea instead of butter milk. This light meal of morning, is called *chhahawela* which means the time of taking *lassi* or *chhaha*. The people who smoke, have a few puffs of smoking just in the morning at the time of rising.

Then comes the time of the major meal or *bhatewela* (meals of noon). Generally, *dal* is cooked with which chapatis are used. With this meal an onion or two are eaten. If *lassi* is available, it is taken again in a large quantity with this meal. Sometimes according to the season, vegetables like gourds, bitter gourds, brinjals, potatoes, carrots, radish and cauliflower are also consumed by some of them because all cannot purchase them due to their stringent economic conditions. Some intelligent women grow saplings of onions and coriander in the *bubbers* (broken pots) in their houses to give a pleasant flavour to *dal* or vegetables. They are very fond of the use of pungent spices which they use commonly in their vegetables.

In the winter season the days are shorter and no *bhatewela* or midday meal is taken. In the hot days of May and June *satoos* or coarse flour of parched barley is taken in the day time, after dissolving it in cool water and putting gur or molasses into it. They are cool in effect and are taken by all the Punjabis. Sometimes on the visit of a particular guest or relative, rice and rice-milk (*kheer*) or *sewian* are prepared as special dishes but this depends upon the economic condition of the host. Most of the Sansis are poor and they hardly make both ends meet and so they

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live on a very poor and coarser type of food. They eat the flour of all the usable grains, wheat, gram, maize, jowar, bajra, etc. The poor families which cannot purchase ghee eat dry food without any application of fat to it. It has been observed that the Sansi women make very big chapatis and on the average an adult consumes two or three chapatis at a time. They are baked on a *tava* (iron sheet used for baking). They also bake their chapatis in country ovens (*tandoors*) which are very common in the Punjab.

The third meal or supper is taken at night. They usually take this meal late in the night and later than the other people of the villages. This seems to be customary among them. Formerly they used to go out for hunting and often returned home at dusk. The women used to begin preparing meals after waiting for the game killed in the day's expedition of their men. While cooking meals they prepare a large quantity of soup which they call *kanji* (*tari*). They generally consume more chillies and salt in vegetables and meat and they call their taste *chand* (*karara*).

In winter, like other Punjabis, they also relish chapatis of bajra, maize or jawar along with *saag* of *sarson* which is a very popular pot-herb in the Punjab. If they have their animals in milk, then they take milk at night before retiring to bed. They are keepers of herds of sheep and goats and so they use their milk and milk products abundantly. I have studied the daily menu of one hundred Sansi families and found that an average family uses annually the following quantities of different spices (*masalas*):—

English Name	*Punjabi Name*	*Quantity*
cumin	*zeera*	¼ seer
coriander	*dhania*	1 seer
chillies	*lal mirch*	10 seers
pepper	*kali mirch*	½ seer
cinnamon	*dalchini*	⅛ seer
turmeric	*haldi*	3 seers
garlic	*thome*	1½ seers

This comsumption is very meagre for a family for the whole year but it is due to their poverty and they cannot afford to purchase them more than these quantities.

From this study of their consumption of food it was found that an adult consumes the following nutrients per day :—

Name of Edible	*Quantity*
flour	¼ seer
vegetables	¼ seer
dal	1 chhatank

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Name of Edible	*Quantity*
ghee	½ chhatank
milk	¼ seer
sugar	¼ chhatank

The average daily diet of an adult Sansi as given above is inadequate for proper health and growth of human body. Therefore, a lot of improvement is needed in their diet which is expected to become richer in future as there is a hope of improvement in their economic conditions.

Domestic Animals: The domestic animals of a community have a great influence on its cultural, economic and social life. The nomadic people are very experienced pastoralists and the Sansis of the Punjab are no exception to it. They keep the following animals:—

In the past nomadic life they were necessitated to keep dogs for hunting, for guarding their camps, goats and sheep and to protect them from the wild animals, thieves and plunderers. Although at present they are not nomads at all in the Punjab, yet they are very fond of keeping hounds. The number of sheep and goats is decreasing in the Punjab because of the decrease in pastures as every cultivable acre is being brought under the plough. Still the sheep and goats form one of the most important economic stays of some families. Since centuries the Sansis have been known as shepherds. They have a special tendency and attitude to rear sheep and goats. The Sansi children, women and young girls, fondle and love very much the young and beautiful kids and lambs. Here one can see their kindness and affection for their animals which they keep. A young Sansi boy feels much happier in going out to graze sheep and goats than to go to school and squat there all the day long.

Some Sansis who live in the cities or near them, keep pigs for selling them for the consumption of pork. The pigs are a good source of their income. Although most of them now hate keeping them for their being dirty animals, yet many Sansis of the districts of Gurdaspur, Karnal, Rohtak, Hissar and Gurgaon rear them and earn their livelihood by selling them.

In the past, till recent times, the donkey or ass was used by them both for riding and as a beast of burden. But now being well-settled in the villages and due to their socio-economic improvement, most of them have given up keeping donkeys. During my tours in the Punjab I saw only one family of Ujagar, Dari and Shangara Sansi of the village of Tharu, district Amritsra,

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having a herd of donkeys which they use as an economic way of life like the *kumhars* (potters). They carry grain of the people of their village to the market town, using donkeys as the beasts of burden. Due to this profession of theirs, some Sansis of the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur deride them though, I think, they deserve appreciation for their dignity of labour.

At present there will be hardly any Sansi house in the Punjab where one does not see cows, buffaloes or bullocks. They keep them for two purposes. Firstly for milk and cultivation of land and secondly for selling the calves when they grow young and become good bullocks to fetch high prices.

In their nomadic life of past, it was not convenient for them to keep fowls in the jungles. Now being settled people, most of them keep hens. They eat their eggs or kill a hen or a cock on festivals or to show hospitality on the visit of some respectable guests or close relatives. Now they are trying to become more of agriculturists than only pastoralists and consequently their life is in a rapid change, regarding their habits and interests of rearing animals.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SANSI GYPSIES AND THEIR ALLIED ETHNIC GROUPS OUTSIDE INDIA

A wandering gypsy, sir, am I,
From Norwood, where we often complain,
With many a tear and many a sigh,
Of blustering wind and rushing rain.

No rooms so fine, nor gay attire,
Amid our humble sheds appear,
No beds of down, nor blazing fire,
At night our shivering limbs to cheer.

—A GYPSY BALLAD.[1]

ORIGIN. Now comes up another important and interesting question, "Are the Sansis and other allied tribes of Northern India found in any other country than India ?" History answers it in the affirmative because of the presence of gypsies in almost all the countries of Europe. Therefore, it is essential to know the history and origin of the European Gypsies, and then to find out whether the Sansis are also found among them or not.

For several centuries, the origin, history and the customs of gypsies did not receive any serious and systematic attention from the historians, the sociologists and the anthropologists. So for a long time questions such as 'Who are the Gypsies ?', 'Whence did they come ?', remained wanting in correct answers. Formerly the following hypotheses were held by the European and other scholars :

1. They were thought to be Egyptians or the people who came into Europe by way of Egypt.
2. They are the natives of India who were expelled by Tamerlane.
3. They are the Jats, Doms, Sansis, Changars and Bazigars of Punjab.
4. They are the people who were scattered by the Muslim invader Allauddin Khilji when he attacked Rajputana.

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1. Published in the *Kentish Register and Monthly Miscellany*, 1. 194 and quoted by Mr. Winsted in his article, "The Norwood Gypsies" published in the Journal of the Gypsy-Lore Society, N.S. IX, P. 147.

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5. They are the heretic sect of Athingani.
6. They are the Signes of Herodotus, Sigines of Strabo and Sansines of Ptolemaeus.
7. They are the Sintians of Homer (some scholars suggest that Homer himself was a Gypsy).
8. They are a pre-historic race, who have been living in Europe for three thousand years.

According to my own view the Gypsies are the descendants of the Indo-Aryans who entered North-West India in ancient times. As history bears it out the Aryans entered India just as Gypsies, wandering shepherds and hunters. As the time elapsed and the circumstances grew favourable they assumed permanent abode in North-West India and especially in the Punjab. Most of them settled as cultivators of land but some of them remained wanderers, shepherds and hunters like their fore-fathers. In the course of many centuries, the settled Aryans socially separated themselves from their peregrinating brothers. The present advanced and settled communities of North India are the desendants of those settled Aryans of that time whereas the Gypsies are the desendants of their nomadic Aryans ancestors. It also seems to be true that some of the settled Aryan people joined their wandering fold after being expelled from their homelands in the Punjab and Rajasthan, due to the Muslim invasions, mutual fights and famines.

After a great deal of research involving trial and error, it was in 1763 that by chance Mr. Stefan Valayi, a Hungarian student of theology made acquaintance with three Indian students in Leydon and by conversation with them found out that their language had much in common with that of the Gypsies of his own part of Hungary. He drew up a list of one thousand words from the Indian students, which he put up before the gypsies of Raab and he was extremely glad to see when the major part of the vocabulary was correctly translated by the Gypsies. It was an extremely important anthropological discovery based on language. It showed that the language of Gypsies was an Indian language connected with the original Sanskrit. This discovery shattered the long-held theory that the Gypsies are Egyptians. After sometime Rudigar, Grellman and Bryant made the discovery more widely acceptable. This discovery was put on more scientific and sound footing by Mr. Pott when he published in 1844-45 his glorious two-volume work, *Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien.* Pott was followed by Miller, Alexander Paspati, Miklosich, Weishocki, Von Sowa, Ko Punicki and many others. The first English writer in this field was John

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Beames who published *A Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India* in three volumes. He regarded the language of the European gypsies as one of the Aryan languages of India. M. de Goeje, a Dutch scholar, asserted that the Jats, and Zottes are related to them. After Beames, Pischel, Woolner, Macfie, Finck, Kuhn, Littmann, Sampson, Macalister, Ackerley and Gilliat-Smith have done very suggestive work in this field. All of these philologists agree that much of the Gypsy language is of Indian origin but it has changed beyond any clear identification with any of the modern Indian languages.

When did the gypsies migrate from India ? Miklosich writes that the Gypsies might have left India in the Middle-Indian period when the modern dialects were taking their proper shape. Some of the accounts suggest that the gypsies were found outside India even before A.D. 1000. The Persian poet Firdausi writes in his *Shah Nama* that King Bahram imported about the year A.D. 420 ten thousand persons of both sexes, from India. This event is also described by the Arabian historian, Hamza of Ispahan, who wrote fifty years before Firdausi. Both of them called these people Gypsies. The Persian poet Firdausi used the Persian word *Zott*, which is the regular Arabic pronunciation of Jatt or Jat of the modern Syrian word for the Gypsies. From a detailed study of the Gypsies it is clear that they passed much time in Persia and Greece before they spread in different parts of Europe. This is proved by their language as Greek words are found in all the European Gypsy dialects, including English. It is also heard from Tabari that after Byzantine was conquered in A.D. 855 the Zott (Jat) inhabitants with their women, children and cattle were taken as prisoners to Greek Empire. There are many accounts which show that the Gypsies were in Europe in the 14th century. The Gypsies were in Corfu in the early fourteenth century. The Empress Catherine de Courtenary-Valois (1301-46) granted authority to the Suzerains of Corfu to receive as vassals certain *homines vaginiti* coming from the Greek mainland and using the Greek rite and by the end of the 14th century all these *homines vaginiti* were subjected to one Baron, Gllanuli de Abitabulo. If the Gypsies were present in Corfu, then the Italians must have come in contact with them earlier because the island belonged to Venice from 1401-1497. This contact is proved by the mention of the Gypsies made by a Venetian Viceroy, Othavianao Buono in about 1395. Hop has invited the attention of many people to the number of ruins in the peninsula bearing the name 'Gyphto Kastron',

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Gypsy Fortress. At about the same time we have the proof of the Gypsies being in Rumania. In 1387, Mircent I, Prince of Wallachia renewed a grant to forty *Salashi*, that is, tents of the gypsy families, by a Charter which was preserved in the State Archives at Bucharest. The gypsies were serfs in Rumania in 1370 and they remained so until 1856. Bataillard has tried to prove that the foreigners called Bemische, who were established sometime before 1400 in bishopric of Wirkburg, were Gypsies. Mr. Winstedt's records clearly prove that the Gypsies were present in Central Europe in the fifteenth century prior to 1417. He has asserted that there were Gypsy settlements at Hildesheim in 1407, at Basle in 1414 and at Meissen in 1416 which takes us to 1417 which is the most widely accepted date for the history of the Gypsies. In 1417 they were seen in Moldaxia, Hungary, Germany and Switzerland and from that year onward there is no dearth of historical records about the European Gypsies. From 1417, the authentic records of the presence and movements of Indian Gypsies in different parts of Europe are abundant. The records are found from the official and municipal reports. It is profusely found in the European accounts of Gypsies that they were not usually treated by them in a tolerable and sympathetic way. They were looked down upon and were seen with doubtful eyes. In order to save themselves, they presented gifts to Bishops, Barons and Emperors and thus they got letters of recommendation from them to move from one country to the other. It is found in record that they presented themselves as penitents and pilgrims exiled from their homes to which effect they carried letters of recommendation from the Emperor Sigismund and a letter from the Pope also.

The history of Indian Gypsies of Europe shows that they had acquired favour from the people, by their docile and lawful behaviour and from 1438 onwards the Gypsies spread rapidly in all the countries of Europe. The first record of their exploring bands is found from Luncburg. Thence they journeyed to Hamburg, Lubeck, Wimer, Rostock, Stralsund and Griefswald. At that time two chroniclers of Lubeck reported that the band consisted of 300 persons who called themselves 'Secani' or 'Tsigans'. They were headed by a duke or a count on a horseback, richly dressed with belts of silver, and having hunting dogs with them. The rest of the retinue was a motley of ill-dressed men, women and children, on foot. They had letters of safe conduct from various princes and from the Emperor Sigismund. They told the people that they were on seven years' penitential pilgrimage imposed by their own

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Bishop as a penance for infidelity to Christian faith. These letters helped them to be well-received almost everywhere. But one surprisingly reads that the Germans behaved with the Gypsies in a very cruel way and many of them were slain. The Swiss chronicler Justinger also described the gypsies and their mode of movement. The Gypsies wandered from one country to the other, eking out their livelihood by every possible means. During that period they were seen at Bolgona and then at Forti, on the road to Rome. On the 17 August 1427, 120 gypsies were seen at Paris who were lodged by authority at La Chapple Sanit Denis, and perhaps they were not allowed to enter the city. They were described, "And it is true that the children, boys and girls were as clever as could be. And most and nearly all had both ears pierced and in each ear a silver ring or two and they said it was a sign of nobility in their country". By 1438, thousands of them were seen in Europe travelling through Germany, Italy and France. They reached Spain by 1447, Poland and Russia by 1501 and Sweden in 1512.

It is notable that the Europeans never made any regular and organised attempt to rehabilitate them and almost all the countries banished those ill-starred people, at sometime or the other. Within a few years of their arrival harsh steps were taken by different countries for their suppression and removal. Deportation of Gypsies was the most common step for their removal. In 1665 an order was passed at Edinburgh, exiling the Gypsies to Jamaica and Barbos. In 1715, the Scottish Gypsies Lindsy, Ross, Stirling, Faa, Yorstoun and Finnick were deposed to Virginia. They were the first gypsies sent to America, followed by the deportation of some other gypsies by France. Portugal and Spain deported them to Africa and South America. England deported them to Australia. Germany did it in 1497, Spain in 1499, France in 1504, England in 1531, Denmark in 1536, Moravia in 1538, Scotland in 1541, Poland in 1557, Venice in 1549, 1558 and 1588. The measures against the Gypsies did not confine only to deportation but they also assumed the form of genocide and we read that "the brutal practices of the Middle Ages were carried out without mercy whenever they fared. Several hundred Gypsies were burnt at the stake".[1] Some examples of those brutal measures can be mentioned as quoted by Dr. Numelin. The Speier Diet (1498) decreed that the Gypsies being betrayers of Christendom should be expelled

1. REGNAR Numelin—*The wandering spirit*—A study of Human Migration, p. 276. London, 1937.

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from the country. The national assembly in Orleans (1565) decreed that the Gypsies should be destroyed with fire and sword. The Italian princes dealt with the poor Gypsies in the same merciless way. Emperor Leopold II passed a still harsher resolution against the Gypsies.

This discussion clearly proves that no patient and systematic attempt has been made in Europe to assimilate them in society or to rehabilitate them to make them good and responsible citizens. It is strange that in spite of these difficulties, harsh and fatal treatment, the Indian Gypsies have been able to survive in many countries of Europe and in Asia Minor also. Formerly their racial affinity was determined on the philological basis but today the science of Anthropology has devised different somatometric, somatoscopic, serological and physiological methods to determine race. ABO Blood-group study is considered to be the most reliable for determining human race. We read today, "It has been known for some time that gypsies of Hindu origin who have lived in Hungary for several hundred years, have the modern Hindu distribution of ABO group."[1] This fact is clear from the following blood-group data quoted by Hooton.[2]

Community and country	*Investigator*	*Number*	*O*	*A*	*B*	*AB*
Hindus of Northern India	Malone and Lahiri	2357	30.2%	24.5%	37.2%	8.1%
Gypsies of Hungary	Gartner	925	28.5%	26.5%	35.3%	9.6%
Native white race of Hungary	Weitzner	1000	35.7%	43.3%	15.7%	5.3%

Today the Indian Gypsies are found in almost all the parts of the globe, designated by different names. Although the opinions about the causes and the date of their exodus from India differ, yet all scholars are concurrent that they are of Indian and Hindu origin and from the Punjab and Rajputana. "Ethnological as well as Etymological and Anthropological Research tends to prove that India, more definitely the Punjab and Rajputana in north-west India, is the original home of Gypsies. To this day tribes are to be found there which have a striking likeness to the gypsies."[3] In the beginning of this century it was estimated that

1. Race and Sangar, *Blood Groups in Man*, p. 12. London, 1958.
2. E.A. Hooton, *Up from the Ape*, pp. 548, 550. New York, 1958.
3. Regnar Numelin, *The Wandering Spirit*, p. 263. London, 1937.

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there were 10,00,000 gypsies in Europe, half of the number being in Hungary and Rumania alone.[1] Outside India, Persia is the earliest country to which the Indian Gypsies migrated. In Persia they separated into two groups—the Ben Gypsies and Phen Gypsies. The Ben Gypsies went southward to Syria and became the ancestors of the present Nawar tribe of Palestine, of the present Rurbat tribe of Syria and of the present Karaci tribe of Persia and Transcaucasia. The Phen Gypsies after staying for sometime in Armenia, journeyed onward through Kurdistan, the Byzantine Empire and Greece and reached Europe.

According to Winick[2], the present total population of the Gypsies in different parts of the world is 20,00,000, and besides the above mentioned writers, Hamilton[3], Hutchisnson, Gregorv and Lydekker[4], Haldane[5], Kroeber[6], Sherring[7], Crooke[8], Williams[9], Cunningham[10], Woolner[11], and several other authors say that the Gypsies of Europe are originally the natives of Northern India.

After discussing the origin and history of Gypsies, now it is proper to find out the presence of Sansis outside India. Latif[12], Russell[13], and Archer[14] use the word Sansi and Gypsy synonymously.

The presence of the Sansi Gypsies is known in Syria in connection with a love-afiair of Hazrat or Sheikh Sannan which is widely read and remembered in the Muslim literature, and is briefly described below giving the background of the love-affair in which Sheikh Sannan indulged under the curse of Hazrat Dastgir :—

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1. Groome-Francis Hindes, *Gypsy Folk-tales*, p. 9. London, 1889.
2. Charles Winick, *Dictionary of Anthropology*, p. 244. London, 1957.
3. Hamilton, *Hungary—Magyars and Tziganes of Today*, 'Peoples of All Nations', edited by J.A. Hammerton, Vol. IV, p. 2657.
4. Hutchinson, Gregory and Lydekker, *Living Races of Mankind*, p. 456.
5. J. B. S. Haldane, *Heredity and Politics*, p. 164. London, 1943.
6. A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, pp. 159, 161. New York, 1957.
7. M. A. Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, p. 387. London, 1872.
8. W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of North-Western Province and Oudh*, p. 30. Calcutta, 1896.
9. H.L. Williams, "The Criminal and Wandering Tribes of India" published in the *Journal of Gypsy Folklore*, New Series, XIII. Liverpool, 1912-13.
10. J.D. Cunnigham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 8. Delhi, 1955.
11. A.C. Woolner, "The Indian Origin of Gypsies in Europe", published in Vol. II of the *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*.
12. Syed Mohammed Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 18. Calcutta, 1891.
13. R. V. Russell and Hira Lal, *Tribes and Castes of Central India*, Vol. II, p. 221. London, 1916.
14. A. John Clarke Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 236. London, 1946.

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"A few saints foresaw the event and predicted it. Two instances are given below: (i) Hazarat Abubakar b. Hawara once said to one of his disciples that in the near future a great saint would be born in Ajam who would be God-fearing and would be highly respected by the people. His name will be Abdul Qadir and he would reside in Baghdad. He would publicly declare, "My foot is on the neck of all Walis" and the Walis of the time would testify the statement; (ii) About 468 A.H., Hazarat Ahmed Abdullah b. Ahmed stated that the child would be born in Ajam whose miracles and whose rank would be very high among the Walis. He would say, "My foot is on the neck of all the Walis."[1]

Time rolled on and the prophecy came true. Hazarat Ummul Khair Fatima gave birth to a son on the first day of the holy month of Ramzan, 470 A.H. (A.D. 1077-78). The child was named Abu Mohammed Qadir. The name of his father was Hazarat Abu-Saleh-Jangi-dost, a descendant of Hazarat Imam Hasan in the direct line. Hazarat Abdul Qadir was born at a place near the town of Jilan in Persia. He had a great power of clairvoyance and miracles and so was respected by the Muslims as the greatest Wali of his time. He migrated to Baghdad from his native place at the age of 18 years, but ever after he was known as Abdul Qadir Jilani, also addressed sometimes as Dastgir. He lived for 90 years. He revealed to the people the truth of Islam through his noble deeds, miracles and scholarship. Hazarat Jilani was 14th in descent from the Prophet Mohammed.[2]

The prediction further proved true and, "about 1519 A.H. (A.D. 1127) one evening the Hazarat was delivering a sermon in his *ribat* or monastery at Babal Halbah. Most of the Sheikhs of Iran were among the audience. In the course of his sermon Saiydena Ghaus-ul-Azam, under divine command declared, "My foot is on the neck of all Walis." Upon this Sheikh Alib Hiti proceeded near the platform and put the Hazarat's foot on his (Alab Hiti's) neck. Next all persons present stepped forward and bent down their necks. When Saiydena Ghaus-ul-Azam made the declaration, the Walis all over the world heard the declaration spiritually and they bent down their necks spiritually and acknowledged his superiority and leadership. Three hundred Walis and seven hundred Rija-ul-Ghaib (hidden persons) some of whom used to dwell on the earth and would fly in the air, bent down their

1. S. A. Salik, *The Saint of Jilan*, p. 2.
2. *Ghaus-ul-Azam*, p. 190. Published by Astana Book Depot, Delhi.

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necks."[1]

Among the Hazarats, the Sheikhs and the Walis who were contemporary of Abdul Qadir Jilani or Dastgir, there lived a very spiritual and pious saint, Sheikh Sannan. He defied his declaration saying, "You cannot drive all the small and the great with the same stick and my neck can never bend under your foot." Thus, with this challenge, a difference arose between Sheikh Sannan and Hazarat Abdul Qadir Jilani. In resentment Hazarat Abdul Qadir Jilani cursed Sheikh Sannan and said, "Well, if you hate my foot, the feet of pigs will rest on your neck."

This was the time when the bands of different communities of Northern India had reached the Muslim countries and some were yet making while others had made their way to Europe as Gypsies. A band of Sansis was moving in the vicinity of Baghdad, who had herds of pigs which they used to rear as they were Hindus and had no compunction against rearing and eating pigs, whereas even the sight of a pig is a taboo to a Muslim.

As God willed, Sheikh Sannan fell in love with a beautiful young girl of the Sansis who used to graze the herds of pigs. He used to wander after her and graze the pigs under the spell of her love. The female pregnant pigs sometimes gave birth to their young ones and Sheikh Sannan used to carry them home from the pasture lifting them on his neck and shoulders. By grazing pigs in the zeal of his love, he violated the rules of the Shariyat of Islam and was degraded in the eyes of the Muslims. As a result he was ex-communicated by the Muslim society. He had many disciples but they deserted him one by one. Some of the orthodox Muslims tried to assassinate him but two of his disciples remained loyal to him and saved his life. At last one of the disciples approached Abdul Qadir Jilani and brought him round. Jilani spiritually revived the staunch principles of Islam in the mind of Sheikh Sannan by miraculously throwing a splash of water on his face when he was sleeping at night in the pen of the pigs of Sansis. He awoke with a changed mind, renouncing the love affair and the grazing of pigs. At last he was forgiven, taken back into Islam and respected as a Great Saint and Sheikh.

However the story and *qissa* of his love affair with a Sansi girl has established its roots in Islamic literature and he is remembered in different languages. Even in Punjabi, Sayed Varis Shah, the greatest romantic Punjabi poet ever born in the land of five rivers,

1. S. A. Salik, *The Saint of Jilan*, p. 71.

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has written in his *Heer* :

Hazrat Sheikh Sannan ne ishaq pichhe,
Sansian de sooran noo chariya ee.[1]

"Hazrat Sheikh Sannan grazed the pigs of Sansis for the sake of love."

He again says :

Ishaq Sheikh Sannan bedeen keeta,
Ohnoon Rabb Rahim rakha jave.[2]

"Sheikh Sannan was ex-communicated for the sake of love, may Merciful God forgive him."

Similarly we hear in Kashmiri songs :

Vuchh tu Sheikh Sannan sooran rakhin, tullan dastiae.[3]

"See, Sheikh Sannan keeps pigs and lifts them with his own hands."

Baines Athelstane, a distinguished ethnologist, writes that there is a great resemblance between the character and temperament of the Sansi women of the Punjab and the Gypsy women of Europe, ".....the Sansiya women are said to be chaste in their relation with outsiders like the European Gypsis, and staunch in their defence of their male relatives when in trouble."[4]

It has very recently come to light that the Sansi Gypsis are present today in France also because in the first half of 1960 a young Christian missionary, named Frances Dopley, who has done a great reformatory work among the Gypsis, observed hunger-strike before a jail in Paris in order to get a young and beautiful Gypsy girl of Sansi community, named Rita, released from imprisonment, so that he may reform her and emancipate her from a life of unsocial activities by marrying her and making her his life-long companion.[5]

In 1954, a series of talks was broadcast by various well-known learned persons from All India Radio, New Delhi, on the cultures of different provinces and parts of India. In a talk entitled "The Culture of the Punjab", Diwan Chaman Lal who himself remained in Europe and got his education there said, "It is said that when ancient king of Babylon needed labour to build vast monuments, he imported thousands of Punjabis in waves over many decades,

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1. *Heer Varis Shah*, p. 60. Published by J.S. Sant Singh & Sons. Lahore, 1917.
2. ibid., p. 94.
3. A Kashmiri song which the Muslim women of Kashmir sing during the month of Ramzan in which the Muslims observe *rozas* or fasts.
4. Athelstane, Baines, *Ethnography*, p. 109. Strassburg, 1912.
5. *The Daily Milap*, p. 7. 7 August 1960, Delhi.

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and with the changes wrought by history these tribes were left to wander through the Middle East, Russia and Europe, the ancestors of the present gypsis. But the fact to remember is that they survived the vicissitudes of Punjabi culture."[1] He further said in his talk in a very decisive way, "A British colonel about to retire from Indian Army called on me one day and brought with him a small book written in France, published in Leyden in the later sixties of the last century. The more I read in this small thesis, the more astonished I became. Here was my own language spoken by a mysterious race, whose origins were in doubt, but whose existence was felt almost in every country of the world. But in the Punjab the only extant comparable affinitive race seemed to be the race known as the Sansis."[2]

Whatever be the time of the egress of Gypsis from India, whichever be the routes of their journey, the fact remains that they were the natives of India and even today their striking likeness with the present Jats and denotified tribes of Northern India is acknowledged by all the Gypsologists. Now the ideas and times are changed and it is expected that as their brothers are being uplifted and rehabilitated in India, similarly they will be well treated and uplifted in Europe and other parts of the world, because now the humanistic and sympathetic methods of approach and welfare of the neglected people have tided over the impatient, unplanned, banishing and destructive measures of the past.

It seems essential and fruitful to describe different aspects of the life of the Gypsies of Europe, after putting their Indian origin on sound footing as it has been done above. The Indian origin of their language has already been discussed and now we may describe their social, cultural and economic ways of life, which will not be beyond the area of interest and some of them still resemble those of their brethren of Northern India.

They went to Europe passing through several Asian countries. They would have gone in different groups and at different times, certainly passing many years in the countries on their way. Hence they must have adopted some of the customs, manners, beliefs and practices of the peoples among whom they happened to live as, in the formation of the cultures of all the societies, borrowing is the greatest component. In spite of borrowing, there are several original and native customs of every society which survive historical,

1. Diwan Chaman Lal, "The Culture of Punjab", broadcast on 29 August 1954, from All India Radio, New Delhi.
2. ibid.

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cultural, political and social intrusions, attacks and alterations and this is what has happened in the case of the European gypsies. Although they have borrowed a lot from other countries and cultures yet they have clung to the Indian culture of their forefathers and are distinct from all the other peoples and races of Europe. At present I do not claim to be a noted gypsologist, but still whatever little I know about their various aspects of life, is briefly described below :—

TABOOS. According to some anthropologists a race without taboos cannot have virility and the races which have taboos are more pure in blood. Like the De-notified tribes of Northern India, most of the taboos of the Gypsies of Europe are connected with food, death and woman.

An unclean object is called *mochardi* by the Gypsies. Cats and dogs are *mochardi* because they lick all over their body—even their genital and excretory organs. The horse does not do it and so is not *mochardi.*

Mochardi is applied to woman in a ceremonial but not in a general sense. A Gypsy would not eat or drink anything if a woman steps over it and this taboo is found to be strictly observed by the Sansis, the Sikligars, the Rajputs, the Bazigars and several other tribes of Northern India. In such cases the food is thrown away or given to dogs and the utensils are destroyed if earthen, and changed if they are made of metal. Some instances have come to notice where the midland Gypsies of Britain do not take water from a tap because they say that the pipes run underground and the women naturally step over them. This is an excellent resemblance of the taboos as practised by the Sansis and especially in the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur where they do not allow women to draw water from and bathe under a tap or a water-pump. Another taboo regarding woman is that she cannot comb or let her hair down in the presence of any man. She can do it within her tent or where she is certain that no man is present. This practice is found in almost all the societies of the Hindus and Sikhs of India. Among the Gypsies of Britain and Denmark, a girl can break this taboo if she is already betrothed and somebody else wants to court her. In this case she lets her hair down and she becomes a taboo for the person who wants to woo her.

The Gypsies observe taboos regarding the deportment of sitting when a woman is in the house. A woman should never pass in front of a man while he is sitting. She must pass behind him even if he is her husband. The taboo is very widsepread and is

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observed scrupulously by the Gypsies of England, France, Hungary, Germany, Austria and Denmark.

Like the Sansis of the Punjab and many other Hindu and Sikh communities of India, a woman is considered unclean and capable of transmitting contamination after child-birth. Usually this period of quarantine lasts from 30 to 40 days. Sometimes the woman is segregated in a separate tent during this period. If a woman is not got out of waggon and the child is born when she is lying within the waggon, all the articles lying in the waggon are considered to be polluted and are thrown away. A woman is considered particularly *mochardi* during her menstruation period. The infants and very young babies are *mochardi* and some of the Gypsy men do not ever kiss them. Their napkins are also considered unclean and are kept isolated from the clothes of men. The German and midland Gypsies of England are very particular in observing this taboo. During menstruation a woman is not allowed to cook or touch food to be eaten by men. The woman should not tell her infirmity of menstruation to men and they know it only when they see her not cooking or touching food. This taboo is strictly observed by the Sikligars of Punjab too.

Some Gypsies believe that if during menstruation a woman touches raw meat to be pickled it will rot. It is also observed by the Sansis and many other people of Northern India in another form. They believe that with the touch or even the shadow of a menstruating woman, the young and fruitful plants wilt away and die. That is why some gardeners resent the entry of women into their fields. A century or so ago punishments were enforced by the Gypsy society on the persons who deliberately violated these taboos. These punishments are still in vogue among the German Gypsies though they are losing their hold in some other countries of Europe.

MARRIAGE: For centuries the European Gypsies had been an endogamous society like their oriental Hindu and Sikh brethren who practised caste-system. But now the endogamy of Gypsies seems to be weakening and marriages have taken place even between the Gypsies and the Gorgios (non-Gypsies). They used to avoid their marriage within their respective clans and the genealogies were traced and verified before the marriages of the proposed couple could actually take place. But at present this consideration is being dropped under the influence of the Muslim and Christian cultures, customs and manners of marriage resulting in inbreeding. Previously a definite consideration was given to the ascendant and

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descendant relations but now some of the Gypsies have married their nieces and aunts. The first cousins are particularly preferred and all this is due to the influence of Western culture. This may happen to the Sansis of the West Punjab under the socio-religious and political influence of the Muslim rule in Pakistan. The very people who used to ex-communicate each other for the offence of marrying within their own clan may marry their cousins after being completely influenced by the customs and manners of Muslim religion. In some of the Gypsy clans of Europe polygyny is practised but the co-wives live in separate tents and possess separate property.

The Gypsies are very frank and unreserved in verbal expressions and jokes among themselves and even with others, but still their high moral values cannot be undermined. Referring to their outward behaviour and actual moral life, Brian Vesey Fitzgerald says, "It is difficult to reconcile much of this with the very high standard set by Gypsies for their women so far as the modesty and chastity is concerned. It is quite beyond dispute that among pure-blooded English Gypsy families there is still a very strong insistence on pre-nuptial chastity. At one time Scottish Gypsies demanded definite proof of a bride's virginity at the time of her marriage."[1] The proof of virginity is customarily demanded by the Gypsies of Spain, France, the Eastern Europe and the United States. There are hundreds of instances where the Sansis of Punjab and some other denotified tribes have ex-communicated or have heavily punished their females for their moral offences. It is well known that a man who wants to do wrong to a Sansi woman can only jeopardise his life. Fitzgerald again says, "There seems to be some evidence, or some suggestion of a tradition, that in the dimmer past a Gypsy girl found guilty of prostitution was buried alive. Certainly up to quite recently a girl found guilty of the prostitution was invariably disowned by her family. Furthermore, in Scotland, at any rate, and within perhaps the last hundred years, the man who wronged an unmarried Gypsy girl did so at the risk of his life."[2] In the past, even 30 or 40 years ago, there had been some cases in the Sansi society of the Punjab in which the immoral women were punished with cutting or mutilating of their noses, ears or burning of their cheeks with red hot iron and this used to be done with the sanction of the

1. Fitzgerald, B.V., *Gypsies of Britain*, pp. 58, 59. London, 1944.
2. ibid., pp. 59, 60.

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Tribal Panchayat. Such punishments are not only the heritage of the ancient Sansi society but they are also found in all the self-respecting communities of India. The Gypsies in the past used to punish their lax women like this and seem to have abided by their customs traditionally as their oriental ancestors used to do.

In the past, child marriage was not considered to be one of the social evils of Indian society and it is still found in some sections of the Indian population. This custom was most deep-rooted among the Rajputs who used to kill the girls at birth and those who escaped infanticide used to be married in childhood, or at any rate, before maturity. Although some writers believe that this was more because of the Muslim invaders who used to carry away the young girls, yet I think this used to be done also for keeping their prenuptial chastity pure. The Gypsies practised early marriage and we read, "Undoubtedly the early age at which English Gypsy girls, in common with other oriental races, have married in the past help in maintaining the high level of prenuptial chastity."[1] Now the Gypsies are giving up the practice of child marriage like their oriental brethren under the power, pressure and persuasion of legal measures and social awakening.

The following marriage ceremonies are observed by the Gypsies :

In one case the Gypsy spouses are said to marry by jumping over a flowering broomstick. The Sikligars of the Punjab also observe this custom. The flowering broomstick may be a cult of fertility. Another marital ceremony is performed by jumping over the *budget*, by which they mean the box in which the Gypsy tinkers keep their tools. In observance of another ceremony the bride and the bridegroom join hands in the presence of their parents and other relatives. In another ceremony of marriage the bride goes to a well or a stream and fetches water to give to the bridegroom for drinking which is also taken by the other members of the community present. This ceremony, though changed a little due to its exile of centuries to far off lands, still has a striking resemblance to its original ceremony called *gharoli* which even at present is observed by all the communities of the Punjab and is described in detail in the marriage rites of the Sansis.

In 1878, another ceremony was noticed at the marriage of David Burton, a Gypsy of England. In this case a loaf of bread was broken into two. On the piece a few drops of blood of bridegroom were poured and on the other those of the bride.

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1. ibid., p. 63.

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The blood was taken through the prick of a thorn. Then each of them ate a little bit of the mixed bread containing the blood of the other. This custom is not found among the Sansis but still it may be a custom observed by some other Indian communities. Regarding this custom Fitzgerald says, "And it is worth pointing out that in certain Indian tribes it is the custom for the bride and the bridegroom to eat food in which their blood has been mixed."[1] I do not doubt this statement at all because the Gypsies do not come of a single community or tribe but they belong to different tribes and communities of Northern India and the Denotified tribes make the bulk of their original racial stock. Hence in order to compare and contrast all the customs and manners of Gypsies with those of the people of Northern India, the Denotified tribes of Northern India need special and exhaustive anthropological study.

Now the European Gypsies have begun to ceremonise their marriage rites in the Churches according to the formal Christian rites, as their counterparts in India have begun to practise and observe the formal ceremonies of the Hindus, Sikhs and of Muslims in Pakistan. After a century or so a time may come when their tribal customs and beliefs may disappear or change beyond recognition and their similarity with their original and ancestral customs and manners may vanish.

Social Organisation. Truly speaking, the investigators have not yet been able to say much about the social organisation of the Gypsies. Both the matrilineal and patrilineal families are found among them. Following their ancestral tribal organisation, they are divided into different clans, and every clan is headed or rather ruled by a headman and that is why George Borrow over mentions his character, Jasper Petilengro, who was a headman. In the Gypsy society hundreds of matrilocal families are found but both the matrilineal and matrilocal families are loosely knit. For instance, the well-known clans of the Gypsies of Britain are Methews, Small Bones, Pages, Laces, Toogoods, Whites, Sternleys, Bustons, Coopers, Smiths, Lees, Lowverlls, Ayres, Boswells, Grays, Herons, Woods, Bosses, Looks and hundreds of more clans.

Their laws of inheritance are very complicated and need a special study but usually the property in house is divided equally among all the children without any discrimination of sex. It is observed that the matrilineal clans are more influential than the

1. ibid., p. 69.

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patrilineal ones. The main supporter of the family is the mother and it is the woman who does greater amount of work for maintaining the family. On the whole, women have more importance than men but the studies of George Borrow changed the focus of all the investigators and even after him much more attention has been paid to the description of Gypsy men, Kings and Chiefs than Gypsy Queens. The Chief is merely a title and after the death of a Chief much care is not taken about his succession or successor but a Queen's succession entails a great deal of caution regarding her succession which shows her higher position than that of the Chief. But still the Gypsologists have always paid more attention to the Chiefs than to the Queens. The title "Gypsy Chief", bestowed on a Gypsy by the Gypsies does not have any importance, but this is not the case of a Queen. In selecting Queens two things are strictly kept in view : (1) property including money possessed by the family or by the individual, (2) she must be a descendant of the family of pure Gypsy blood, absolutely unmixed with Gorgio or with any other impure taint.

The Gypsy Queen Urania, the Queen of Gypsies of England and wife of the Gypsy Chief Levy Boswell, died on 2 April 1933. She was succeeded by Morjiana Lee who possessed the requisite qualities. Most of the Gypsologists are of the opinion that Queen is the highest authority of the Gypsies as is the mother in a matriarchal family. That is why the matrilineal, matrilocal and matriarchal families were very common among the Gypsies in the past. But now the patriarchal, patrilocal and even patrilineal system is replacing the old system.

Regarding their mutual disputes the Gypsies do not usually approach the legal Courts of the State but they settle them in their Tribal Councils within their community.

Gypsy Caravan. The term 'Caravan' is used in two senses: (1) a company of travellers journeying together and (2) a covered waggon used by the Gypsies as a domicile. In England the word Caravan has attained so much attachment that to an ordinary Englishman from the countryside, the words Caravan and Gypsy are synonymous, though it is also called van or waggon. The term for it in the Gypsy dialect is 'Vardo' and a Vardo is the most valuable property of a Gypsy. It means a home for him in which he keeps all of his belongings along with the members of his family.

The Gypsy waggon appeared in European countries at different times; it appeared in England much later than in Hungary

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and Bohemia. Charles Dickens was the first writer to mention a waggon in England in his *The Old Curiosity Shop* and he did it in 1840 which he called Caravan but the modern waggon differs very little from the old one. The typical Vardo is a single-roomed house set on high wheels having windows at back and sides and an entrance and a detachable ladder at the front. It has also a rack known as a crotch at the back for keeping domestic articles of various types. Underneath the waggon at the back is a cupboard for the culinary articles. Inside the waggon on the back-side area is the coal stove with chimney rising up through the roofs, a cupboard and a locker-seat. On the opposite side there is a crockery cupboard and drawers for keeping the family clothes. The back part is fitted with two-berthed sleeping seats. Although there may be slight variations from waggon to waggon, yet a typical Vardo is fitted with the above-mentioned things.

In regard to the external design of the Vardo, Ferdinand Gerard Huth is the greatest authority as he has exhaustively studied this aspect of the Gypsylore of the Gypsies of Britain. According to his researches there are the following four types of Gypsy Caravans :—

1. *Leeds Waggon.* It is called Leeds Waggon because its original builder named Bill Wright used to live near Leeds. Due to its shape it is also called Bow or barrel-shaped waggon. Its average length is 9′—6″ and it is 6′—6″ in width at the widest part. This waggon is most popular among the Gypsies of north country. It is also called Yorkshire waggon because they say that the best waggons of this type are made in Yorkshire. It is considered to be the most durable waggon.

2. *Reading Waggon.* It is so named because one of the best builders of this type of waggon used to live in the town of Berkshire. It has straight sides with wheels fitted outside the body. Reading was once a great winter resort of Gypsies and a family of Burton clan used to make beautiful waggons for them. The Reading waggon is usually 10 feet and 6 inches in length. In Sussex 14 feet-long waggons were also seen by some investigators. Its width is 6 feet. They vary slightly from waggon to waggon in their fittings. The more costly vans are fitted with sky-lights. Excellent waggons were also built in Derbyshire.

3. *Burton Waggon.* It is also known as Show-man's waggon. It is a straight-sided waggon like the Reading waggon, but its wheels are fitted underneath the body instead of outside. Its usual length is 10′—6″ and usual width is 6 feet. All the Burton waggons

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are made with a panelled or sometimes with a rib and a match-board body. About four-inch panel runs round the centre of the body. Its roof is flatter than that of the Reading waggon. The Burton waggon is ornamented with carved pieces of wood which are sometimes screwed on different parts of its body.

4. *Ledge Waggon.* It is also called Cottage waggon. It is not manufactured at any particular place and is built by recognised builders. This waggon is most commonly seen on the roads. In shape they are midway between the Leeds and the Reading Caravans. They are straight-sided and their wheels are not fitted outside. They are not barrel-shaped and have their roofs like those of the Reading waggons. Its usual length is 9′—6″ and width is 6 feet. It is the lightest and the cheapest Gypsy Caravan.

5. *Brush or Fen Waggon.* Another type of waggon is Brush or Fen waggon. The name Fen indicates that once these waggons used to be made in the Fen country and the name Brush indicates nothing but the article which their owners used to sell.

Besides covered waggons, two types of open carts are also used by the Gypsies. The cart having four wheels is called a Pot-cart, and the one having only two wheels does not have a special name. These open carts are 9′ long and 4′ wide. Like the Leeds waggon, they are fitted with all the necessary equipment. There are many more types of carts but they are only known as carts. The sleeping arrangements in a Vardo are much better than those of a cart. The sleeping berths of living waggons are six feet long and three to four feet wide.

Here I recall an interesting incident of the Sikh history. In the 18th century the Sikhs were under very trying and troublesome circumstances when the Punjab was a prey to the Muslim invaders, the Sikhs were particularly their target of torture and they had to give up their villages and towns and used to live in the jungles, deserts and mountains. They used to appear suddenly like a whirlwind to attack the invaders. Once the Muslim invader Nadar Shah enquired about the Sikhs and their homeland, when his troops were attacked by the Sikhs and their booty was snatched from them. He was told, "The saddle of their horse is their homeland and the arms and the clothes on their persons is their property." Similarly the homeland of Gypsies is their caravan, cart and the road.

As already mentioned a Gypsy Vardo is a mobile home. The Gadi Lohars and Sikligars are seen at present also moving in an absolute Gypsy manner in the Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh

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and Madhya Pradesh, etc. They claim a Rajput origin and account for their present nomadic condition due to their expulsion from Rajasthan on account of the Muslim invasions and the famines. Therefore, it seems certain that the present Gypsies of Europe and some other parts of the globe are closely related to these people of Northern India.

All the Gypsies cannot afford to possess caravans and carts. Therefore, thousands of them take to the road on foot or travel riding on horses, ponies and donkeys accompanied by their hounds and other paraphernalia. Such Gypsies, trudging the roads, are also seen in almost all parts of India excepting the Southern parts.

Disposal of the Dead. At present the Gypsies bury their dead but still in Europe there is hardly any specific and separate graveyard of the Gypsies. Their Indian brethren cremate their dead but the Gypsies seem to have adopted burial as the method for disposing of their dead, under the force of circumstances. After their egress from India they never settled permanently anywhere and have been nomads since centuries. Hence they had to bury their dead during their sojourn and whenever somebody died, they might have encamped for a while, buried the dead person and proceeded on. Firstly, this might have been due to save themselves from the cost of wood needed for burning the dead and secondly this might be due to the cultural influence of the Muslims and the Christians in whose countries they have been living since centuries.

As it has already been mentioned in their taboos, if a child-birth takes place in a waggon, all the articles in it are considered polluted and are rejected. It happens too in the case of the death of a person if it takes place in a Vardo. Fitzgerald tells that Mrs. Caroline Penfold died on 17 April 1926 at Crediton, Devon, and after her burial the waggon along with all its belongings, was reduced to ashes. The crockery was broken and her ornaments excepting a very precious golden ring were buried along with her. In the past the Gypsy society was averse to bury their dead along with the Christians in their sanctified graveyards. Like their oriental brethren they keep the face of the dead body uncovered till it is carried to the grave, so that the relatives and friends may see it. They observe fasts till the dead body is interned. Fasting ends just when the mourners return from the graveyard and sometimes a special meal is served to the persons present at the funeral. Like the Sansis and several other tribes of Northern India, the Gypsies keep a constant vigil over the dead body from the time of the death to the time of its burial as they also believe

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like their Indian counterparts that if the dead body is left unwatched, the spirit may return to it as a ghost and may give a lot of trouble to the people. According to the observation of Fitzgerald, the vigils with this belief and superstition took place over the dead body of Vasthi who was burried in 1939. The vigils also took place in England over the dead body of Mary Buckland in 1903 and over the dead body of Abraham Buckland near Oxford in 1923. This practice is entirely an oriental heritage of the Gypsies.

Although the custom has changed to some extent, yet like the *deeva-vatti* of the Sansis and many other Hindu and Sikh communities of Northern India, the Gypsies do the same by burning candles.

In the case of coffin the best possible new clothes are used but in some cases they use best clothes but only out of the clothes which have already been worn by the dead person when he was alive. Sometimes the clothes of the dead body are turned inside out and this indicates the belief of the Gypsies in reverse act according to which the deceased person goes back to the world from where he came at birth.

In some cases a coin is kept in the coffin or put in the mouth of the dead person before the grave is filled in. This custom is found among the Sansis and many other people of the Punjab. The custom is observed with the belief that the soul of the dead, if needed, may spend the money on its way to the next world. Sometimes the food is also buried along with the dead body with the belief that its soul may not starve in sojourn from this world to the next. According to another belief of the Gypsies the ghosts are afraid of bread and grain. Sometimes a hammer is also buried with the dead body along with the money. The European Christian investigators have interpreted these practices that the Gypsy belief is that the soul of the dead will knock at the door of the heaven with hammer and with money it will pay to Saint Peter for entry into heaven. I do not agree with this interpretation as the money is put in the coffin or in the mouth of the dead among the oriental races who have nothing to do with the belief in Saint Peter. Hence this custom is a remnant of the oriental practice. The Gypsies usually shirk to touch, handle or lift the dead body as they have a great fear of the ghosts and evil spirits.

Regarding the funeral processions some English Gypsies have taken to the custom of English folks and like them, men wear black clothes and the women wear white clothes on such occasions.

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Some Gypsies are observed to pay annual visits to the graves of their important dead relatives for worship and tie red ribbons to the plants planted on the graves. This is nothing but a practice of ancestor-worship, like their Indian counterparts. In almost all Hindu and Sikh communities the ancestor-worship is practised in one form or the other. The death anniversaries of all kinds are the relics of ancestor-worship in much modified forms. The red-yellow thread (*mauli*) of the people of Northern India seems to have been replaced with the red ribbon in the case of Gypsies. Sansis along with their several allied ethnic groups of Northern India had been leading nomadic life for many centuries but still, according to Naidu[1], they used to assemble in Ajmer and Marwar for *Chhatri Puja*. Chhatri Puja is the annual worship of the cremated spots (*marhis*) or the *samadhis* or tombs erected over the place of cremation of one's ancestors and this is at present also a common practice among the Rajputs of Rajasthan. Regarding Gypsies we read, "The return of relatives to the grave on the anniversary of the death, as formerly, at some special time of the year.....is an established Gypsy custom."[2] The Gypsy ceremony of annual worship at the graves resembles cent per cent those of the Sansis. The Sansis drink, eat and enjoy and spill liquor and ghee on the graves on the occasion of this annual worship. Some Gypsies also do the same. So much so that according to the investigations of James, Cribbs and Thompson, quoted by Fitzgerald, we read that a Gypsy named Josian Scamp was buried at Odstock in Wiltshire in 1801 and the annual visit was made by his relatives who drank, ate, enjoyed and spilt liquor on the grave. The drunk brawlers made a great deal of fuss and the Church authorities were annoyed with their intemperance and they prohibited the Gypsies gathering on their annual visits. This prohibition utterly hurt the feelings of the daughters of the deceased and they invoked God and the spirit of the dead and prayed against the Church authorities in the words, "May the person never be understood when preaches, may the Church-warden be a bankrupt, may the clerk die before the year is out."[3] It is said that the curse was fulfilled *in toto*.

This habit of intemperance, brawling and fights of Sansis is mentioned by Captain Ellis who was working as an Assistant to

1. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, *The Criminal Tribes of India*, Vol. III, p. 23. Madras, 1907.
2. Fitzgerald B.V., *Gypsies of Britain*, p. 93. London, 1944.
3. ibid p. 95.

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the Resident at Gwalior in 1842 that some hundreds of years ago a great fight took place among the Sansis at the time of Chhatri Puja, whose root-cause was a Sansi woman named Booti. This fight proved very ruinous to those Sansis and it is quoted by Paupa Rao Naidu in his *Criminal Tribes of India*.[1] This event is also mentioned by W.H. Sleeman in his report on Budhuks, in which he has described the Sansis.[2]

GYPSY FORTUNE-TELLERS. For the English folks, a Gypsy woman and a fortune-teller are synonymous words. Whenever some Gypsies come to a city or a town the English people say :—

And the every Gypsy woman old,
A maiden's fortune will be told.

The civilized or the savage, the educated or the illiterate, the simpleton or the sophisticated, all are very anxious to know their future. This is an innate instinct of curiosity in man. Making shrewd use of this curiosity of man, the Gypsies make lucrative trade of their astrological knowledge. From a detailed history of the Gypsies of Europe it appears that first they adopted the calling of fortune-telling and, truly speaking, no race has done more than Gypsies to spread on the globe the belief in sorcery, astrology, magical practices and sympathetic cures. The Gypsy women have always been known to possess occult power. The Gypsy women fortune-tellers go from door to door and approaching the members of the house, preferably women-folk, say after uttering someting appealing to them, "Cross my hand with silver, pretty lady." By this they mean that she would tell her some important events of her future life and to do it the donation of a silver coin is essential. In this way they collect money. This very practice is prevalent among the fortune-tellers of India and especially among the Bhatra fortune-tellers about whom Kennedy says, ".....the cheat or the swindler tells him that the only way to be saved is to make a donation either in gold, silver or clothes."[3] There are not many adept Gypsy fortune-tellers but some of them are very dexterous in reading characters and they tell more on the basis of physiognomy than on the knowledge of palmistry, because they have been living on their wits for generations and have acquired a skill to read the characters of others. Mr. Ley Land, the first President of the Gypsy Lore Society, had

1. p. 23, Vol. III. Madras, 1907.
2. Published in 1849, pp. 237-307.
3. Kennedy, M., *Criminal Classes*, p. 333.

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described the rules applied by the Gypsy fortune-tellers.

The *hakano-baro* is practised by the Gypsies in all parts of the world. It is a confidence-trick in which the client is persuaded to hand over his valuables to the sorcerer so that he or she may turn them into gold or increase them manifold. The client is sworn not to reveal this undertaking to anybody else. The sorcerer wraps all the valuables in a package and pretends to apply his sorcery to them in a secluded place. After winning the confidence of the householders he makes off with the valuables leaving a similar package behind. The client who had taken an oath keeps quiet for some days and is utterly disappointed on seeing the contents of the package missing but then it is too late to regain them.

This trick is played by some Bhatras, Bairagis and Fakirs in India also. The swindling method of *hakano-baro* is especially practised by the Jadu Brahmins, a denotified tribe of India.

Some European Gypsy women actually possess the spiritual power of predicting future and this was recorded by some investigators in the past. Among such Gypsy women of the recent times a few names need a special mention. Urania Bosweel who died on 24 April 1933, had a special power of foretelling death and danger and her prophecies proved true. She predicted in 1897, "Queen Victoria would see the leaves fall four times before she went to her long rest." She had also presaged, "……the King who comes after her will die long before my turn comes." She also predicted, "After that the world will change—not at all at once, but we will live to see strange things, you and I. Men will fly like birds, and swim under the water in the boats shaped like fishes. They will sit by their own fireside and listen to voices and music a thousand miles away, same as if it was in the room."

The famous prophecy of Mother Shipton is remembered in England in the following words :—

Carriages without horses shall go,
And accidents fill the world with woe;
Iron on the water shall float
as easily as a wooden boat.

Reni also deserved a high rank like Mother Shipton in her faculty of prediction. She warned Mr. Vanderbilt at Henley Regatta that he must not sail in the maiden voyage of the Titanic which was being built at that time. The prophecy came so true that in April of the following year the Titanic struck an iceberg and Vanderbilt and 502 other persons were drowned.

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Rev. D.M.M. Bartlett gave three predictions about her own family. In April she presaged that her son Levy would not survive beyond February of the next year. He died and was buried on 2 February, at Bromley, Kent. She correctly predicted the deaths of her other two relatives including her brother-in-law. She predicted her own death correct to the date and the year.

At present the Gypsies also follow the calling of fortune-telling in different parts of the world. If one wants to see the modern Indian fortune-tellers outside India, one can see plenty of them in Britain. They are the Sikh Bhatras of the Punjab whose methods and practices of fortune-telling fully resemble those of the Gypsies of Europe. It seems certain that the ancestors of the Bhatras of the Punjab and those of the Gypsy fortune-tellers of Europe would have descended from the same ethnic stock of Northern India because even at present the crystal of alum is used by the Gypsies and the Bhatras of the Punjab. The use of the crystal by the Gypsy fortune-tellers, is mentioned by Fitzgerald[1], whereas its use by the Bhatra fortune-tellers is mentioned by Kennedy.[2]

MEDICINAL VISION OF GYPSIES. In the past the Gypsies seldom sent for a doctor as they are wonderfully adept in herbal medicines. In India, the herbal medicines are known as vedic medicines. Now the Gypsies have legally got to have the services of a doctor as the death of a person cannot be registered without the certificate of a doctor. The Gypsies all over the world have a great renown as healers. The Gypsy knowledge of herbs and medicinal plants is even today as vast as the Aryans had in the Vedic age and the Benedictine monks had in Europe in the medieval age.

It is not possible to have the complete herbal knowledge of the Gypsies and the medicines which they use. Fitzgerald kept making a list of the Gypsy medicinal plants for 20 years during his investigations of the Gypsy lore, but could not learn as much as he wanted to do because this is a great secret of the Gypsies which they do not disclose to strangers and is only meant for handing over to their own descendants from generation to generation and this is how they have been able to keep this valuable knowledge intact for thousands of years. Thompson studied the herbal knowledge of the Gypsies before Fitzgerald did but he also could not make a complete catalogue of their medicinal plants. However, on this aspect of Gypsy lore, Fitzgerald had done good work

1. Fitzgerald, B.V., *Gypsies of Britain*, p. 182. London, 1944.
2. Kennedy, M., *Criminal Classes*, p. 323.

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and he gives a list of 79 medicinal plants.

Besides human ailments the Gypsies are known to be very successful doctors of animals and especially of the horses. They have special skill in curing the horse diseases like Colic, Broken-wind, Bog Spavin, Coughs, Cracked Heels, Quittor, Mange, Sprains and Sores, Worms, Thrush, Thrombi and Staggers. They apply their own indigenous remedies to all of these ailments.

Millions of the people in the world believe in the efficacy of the symbolic magic in curing certain diseases. The people of the Punjab call these symbolic measures *toonas*, *jhara*, etc. The Gypsies too have a very deep belief in symbolic, suggestive or sympathetic magic. The symbolic magic of the Gypsies is in itself a vast subject but only a few instances are given below :—

1. The warts could be cured if a big slug of a black colour is caught alive and is impaled on a thorn of a bush. As the slug would die the warts would shrivel and on its being wilted the warts will fall off.

2. They believe that if a spider is caught and is kept in a bag which a person carries with him, the trouble of ague will disappear on the death of the spider.

3. Tansy in boots and a spring of gorse in one's pocket is a proof against fevers.

4. The skin of a frog or eel carried on one's person keeps away rheumatism.

It is believed that some Gypsy women cured diseases without any treatment or *toona*. They do it just by wishing the disease to disappear but they can do it only to others and not to themselves. This may be due to their occult power.

The Gypsies do not know only the useful medicinal herbs and plants but they are also fully conversant with the poisonous plants. Sometimes they used these poisonous substances for killing animals to get their flesh for eating. They put these poisonous things in the food of goats, sheep and pigs, etc., know the planned death and remain in the neighbourhood of the incident. After the death of the animal which has been poisoned, they innocently approach the owner and get the animal with the condition of returning the skin to the owner and getting the meat themselves. About half a century ago, this practice was in vogue among some of the Sansis and their allied people but now due to their education, enlightenment and improvement in economic condition, this practice has been absolutely renounced. Now it has also disappeared from the Gypsy society. The Sansis call poison *theema* in their own dialect

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which they used to apply in the form of different substances. The Gypsies use barium as their main poisoning substance. So much so that even George Borrow, the father of Gypsology was poisoned by Mrs. Hearne's cake. It is believed that she was annoyed with him and poisoned him. After eating the cake he guessed her mischief and described his condition in which all the symptoms of barium-poisoning are clear. He was poisoned on Saturday, 11 June 1825, and died as a result of it.

Gypsy Tricks for Killing Animals. In the past some Gypsies were specialists in killing sheep by a simple trick by which they used to break the neck of the sheep but could dupe its owner. This trick of theirs is described as follows: "And other method was to break the neck of the lamb and then place its head through the bars of the gate or in the slats of the fence in such a way that death was accidental."[1] This trick of killing sheep had been used by a section of the Sansis or Bhatus, called Bhedkuts, till very recently. The word *Bhedkut* literally means a sheep-killer. I have verified this fact from hundreds of Bhedkuts and they have described the trick just as it has been mentioned above. Regarding their trick, Bhargwa also writes, "It has been admitted by the Bhedkuts of the Punjab that originally they were Bhatus and they still make matrimonial alliances with them. Those Bhatus who migrated into the Punjab began to be known as the Bhedkuts due to their notorious habit of stealing sheep and breaking their necks so that they might not be able to bleat. In fact the words Bhatu and Bhedkut are used for one and the same tribe."[2]

It is known that in the past some Gypsies used to put poison stealthily in the food of cattle; sometimes for killing them for the purpose of getting their meat to eat and sometimes to cause them sickness so that the owners of the cattle may approach the Gypsies for removing their ailments and in this way the Gypsies could earn something.

It is reported that some of the Gypsies used to kill cattle by blocking their throat with wool or hair due to which they are killed by suffocation. This method was also in vogue among the Gypsies of Northern India but now it has disappeared. Some old persons (above 80 years of age) of the wandering tribes of Northern India have told me that in the past their ancestors used to kill cattle by applying poison to the end of a sharp substance, and giving its

1. Fitzgerald, B.V., *Gypsies of Britain*, p. 160. London, 1944.
2. Bhargwa, B.S., *The Criminal Tribes*, p. 6. Lucknow, 1949.

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thrust into the mouth of an animal, thus making a wound from which the poison could spread throughout its body and the animal was killed.

One thing has struck me very convincingly and that is the way of their hunting, killing the wild animals and preparing and cleaning them before putting them into the cooking vessel. I have seen the wild animals being killed by some communities of Northern India in the very way as they are being killed by the Gypsies. The special instance is in case of the hedge-hog which is called Jhaoo or Kandiala by the people of the Punjab but it is called Witchi by the Gypsies. According to the description of Gypsies found in the book of Webb published in 1960 the Gypsies put the end of a stick into the mouth of a Witchi or a hedge-hog and hold it over the flames of fire till its spines are completely burnt. After that its belly is ripped open and is cleaned for cooking. At present the very method is being used by several communities of Northern India who relish the eating of a Jhaoo.

It is noteworthy that though they live thousands of miles apart the Gypsies and the Bhedkuts used the same trick in killing sheep and it is their strict secret. It shows that this trick was carried by the ancestors of the Gypsies from India to other countries and the trick might have been invented to quench their hunger during the period of their destitution and wanderings in India.

PROFESSIONS AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF GYPSIES : It is believed that a real Gypsy can earn his livelihood out of anything or nothing but still some professions are more common to Gypsies in all parts of the world. It is not easy to make a perfect list of their callings. There is a list of 135 different Gypsy professions in the index to the old series of the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, which should have been doubled or trebled by now.

Music is an inseparable part of the life of the Gypsies, though it has never become the main profession of their life as a community anywhere. Usually the Gypsy musicians are harpers and fiddlers. Some of them are good dancers. In Hungary most orchestras are composed by the Gypsies. Some Gypsies are goldsmiths, silversmiths and coppersmiths.

Briefly speaking, some more important occupations of the Gypsies are given below :—

Fortune-tellers, tinkers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, silversmiths, rat-catchers, mole-catchers, dealers in horses, farmers, basket-makers, poachers, beggars, herb-gatherers, herbalists, masons, fruit-vendors, carpenters, singers, cattle-breeders

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and shepherds, china-menders, knife-grinders, clothpeg-makers, booksellers, umbrella-menders, collectors of wild birds' eggs, acrobats, bare-back riders in circus, rabit-catchers, fishermen, professional wrestlers, pawn-brokers and professional boxers, etc.

The general condition of the Gypsies is poor and as a matter of fact they do not have a strong attachment to possession and property. This detached view towards property suits their ever-wandering life better and they have been moving from place to place and land to land, single-handed or with their caravans which can house the necessaries which can enable them to earn their livelihood for subsistence.

It does not mean that some of them have not taken to the settled life. In Hungary, their most favourite resort, they have their separate villages. In Russia, some families have risen to such a good socio-economic status that some of them are married to Russians—Gypsy men as well as women. It is an historical fact that one of the most attractive, accomplished and cultured countesses of the families related to Tolstoy was a Gypsy by birth. A Gypsy is called 'Zingana' in Russian. In Moscow, some Gypsies are the owners of beautiful buildings.

Here a word may be said about the Gypsy boxers of England who have earned a good name. In the old bare-knuckle days of boxer's ring the following Gypsies were champions of England under the Prize Ring Rules :—

Hooper, the Tinman whose real name was William Cooper was a middle weight champion in 1790. Tom Smith was a champion of 1844. Posh Price whose real name was Amors Price was a middle-weight champion of early 19th century. Tom Sayers was a heavy-weight champion of England in 1857. Joe Goss distinguished himself in his battle with Heenan Mace and he was an unchallenged champion of the world. Even after the coming of gloves, Diggers Stenley won the world championship and Gypsy Daniels won the English championship.

In short the Gypsies are following all possible callings which could fetch them their livelihood and which are within their possible reach.

This is what could briefly be said about the Gypsies as space does not allow to give a long description but in order to know more about Gypsies an inquisitive scholar may read the works shown in the Bibliography at the end of this chapter.

WILL GYPSIES SURVIVE POSTERITY ? A virile race can never be decimated and so is the case with the Gypsies who are found

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in their native country, India, West Asia, Europe, Siberia, Egypt, North Africa, Australia and America. All the biologists are unanimous in their opinion that man is the most widely distributed living being on the face of the earth and in this respect all the races of Homo sapiens, the greatest credit goes to the Gypsies. Although the European scholars have written much on the Gypsies yet they stand a challenge to the Science of Man—Anthropology. Since many centuries the Gypsies have been passing through appalling and trying times and annoying and adapting several cultures, condemned, coerced and even crucified by many peoples and their Governments, speaking many languages and following multitudes of occupations. They have been living on the roads, in waggons and in the woods, participating in and contributing to various cultures of the world; but still they are Indians in their own speech, manners, beliefs, practices, customs and costumes which clearly resemble those of their oriental counterparts. Practically speaking, their physical features have not changed at all and they represent even now the natives of Northern India living in all the parts of the world. Although the scientific inventions have revolutionised the old crafts and industries yet the Gypsy clothes-peg-maker has the same tools and techniques as his forefathers had, centuries ago. If the Gypsies all over the world have survived utterly disintegrating and destructive vicissitudes of the past, it is certain that they shall survive posterity with all their typical outward toughness and roughness of body and tender elixirs of their roaming, romantic, carefree and colourful life.

A Challenge to Research. The Gypsies do not belong to any one community. They belong to different communities of Northern India, particularly of the Punjab. But still on the whole they belong to the same racial stock. I think that the ancestors of the bulk of the Gypsies found outside India had their origin in the Punjab, which I confirmed from many discussions with Dr. Jan Kochanowski of the University of Paris, Sorbonne. He got his Doctorate from the Paris University for writing a thesis on the Romany or Gypsy language, two parts of whose book, *Gypsy Studies*, were published by the International Academy of Indian Culture, Hauz Khas, New Delhi. He had been in India for three years and for two years he stayed at Delhi where he often met me and discussed with me some important problems of the Gypsies of India as well as those of Europe. It may be told that he himself is a Gypsy, born in Europe, educated at Paris, where his mother, wife and two sons are living at present. Honestly and

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frankly speaking, in my very first meeting with Dr. Kochanowski, I instinctively felt as if we met like the long-separated relatives, His very embrace, looks, and his Punjabi habits which unfolded themselves as our contact and candidness grew, manifested much of the psycho-physical deportment of the people of the Punjab. The view about the Punjabi origin of Gypsies has also been corroborated by my discussion with George A. Floris, a Gypsologist of Hungary, a country in which half of the total population of the European Gypsies, is found. This fact is abundantly proved by the experience and opinion of Chaman Lal who has said in his recently published book, "*Punjab, Punjab, Punjab*", was the greeting with which the first educated Gypsy I met, an advocate of Belgrade, welcomed me in his modern apartment. I was accompanied by a Secretary from our Embassy in Yugoslavia, who was a Punjabi. I asked the Yugoslav friend, M. Svetzar Simic, the reason for his reference to the Punjab in greeting us. He replied : 'Don't you know my ancestors came from the Punjab ? I can prove it.' Tears formed in my eyes when his seventy-year-old mother embraced me. I felt as though my mother had been reborn. M. Simic's wife, their two sons and their maid—who could pass off anyday for a Punjabi—all greeted me as though they were greeting a relation. The elder is eager to come to India to study Hindi. M. Simic himself has done vast research in the History of Gypsies.

"I had a similar welcome from Romanies (Gypsies) elsewhere, whether in Europe, America or Australia. They greeted me as if I were a blood relation. Even the words they used when doing so—"Tu main ek Rakta" (You and I have the same blood)—were so completely Hindi. Wherever it was that they lived, they spoke the same language which had an unmistakable stamp of north-west India".[1]

Although hundreds of investigators have studied various aspects of their life yet they stand in an enquiry and astonishment regarding many problems and questions of Gypsies. The most important of them is, "If the Gypsies are mostly the natives of the Punjab, to which different castes, communities and tribes do they actually belong ?"

This could be determined by answering the following questions : What is the historical alliance of different groups of Gypsies with different castes of India ? What are their mutual cultural simi-

1. Chaman Lal, *Gipsies, Forgotten Children of India*, pp. 1 & 2. Delhi, 1962.

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larities ? What are their ethnic affinities ?

The answers to these questions entail the study of history, ethnology, philology and the folklore of these people.

So far the Gypsies are only considered to be descendants of their ancestors who migrated to other countries in the past whose history in some aspects is dim and doubtful. More reliable and authentic results could be achieved if an all-round study of different groups of Gypsies and those of the people of Northern India is made. These investigations should be made on exclusive tribes as well as on the whole. Under the age-long and day-to-day process of acculturation, all the communities are undergoing a change but still preserving some cultural and social traits of their long departed ancestors. It is not possible that all the groups should undergo an absolutely similar cultural change and ethnic miscegenation. They may be of similar trends but always differing in degrees in case of different groups.

Although some anthropologists and serologists have done some work on the Gypsies and their counterparts in India, yet the work is insignificant in face of puzzling problems involved in the methodological and scientific study of the Gypsies. The blood tests and anthropometric measurements of all their allied groups within India and outside India deserve the foremost attention. I believe that even among Gypsies there are different groups which have slight ethnic and cultural differences, though originally they belong to different castes of Northern India descended from the Indo-Aryan stock. Mr. Webb writes, "Consequently although they are all members of Romany race, nevertheless they have their own subtle differences, just as Yorkshire man and a Devon man, for instance, can both be thoroughly English and yet be different."[1] Not only the local differences but also there are found different tribes among the Gypsies, and each tribe has a certain area more attached to it for its wanderings. "It would appear that they were divided into clans or tribes, each bearing a particular name and to which a particular district more especially belonged, though occasionally they changed districts for a period, and incited by their characteristic love of wandering, would travel far and wide."[2]

In the end one should pay a hearty tribute to the European and other foreign scholars due to whom the world has known much about the Gypsies. But at the same time, much greater

1. Webb, W.C., Gypsies, The secret people p. 71. London, 1960.
2. Borrow, George, *The Zincali or an account of the Gypsies of Spain*, p. 24. London, 1926.

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amount of discredit has been challenging the Indian scholars since centuries reminding them of their negligence of the study of the Gypsies and it may be hoped that some day some Indian scholar may make salient contributions to the study of Gypsies because he would be able to understand their customs and manners better than the foreigners as many of them are daily practised around him by his own kith and kin and he speaks a language which the Gypsies speak all over the world though in a little changed form.

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CHAPTER V

THE SANSI DIALECT

"One great use of words is to hide our Thoughts."

—VOLTAIRE.

SOME FOREIGN SCHOLARS have attempted to study Indian languages and Dr. Grierson towers above all. He undoubtedly dealt with some of the dialects of certain castes and tribes, but he did not touch the Sansi dialect. Similarly R.G. Latham in his *Ethnology of India* published in 1858, does not mention it anywhere. The first person to try to deal with the code language or the secret dialect of the Thugs, the criminal Tribes and the Dacoits, was W.H. Sleeman.[1] The Thugs belonged to various castes of Indian people and, therefore, Sleeman's study does not throw helpful light on the code or secret dialect of any particular tribe or caste. If ever anybody aimed at all at a study of the languages of the Denotified tribes, it was with the purpose of studying crime and never with a philological interest.

The first person who attempted to study the Sansi dialect on some systematic lines was Rev. T. Grahame Bailey when at Wazirabad, district Gujranwala, West Punjab. He read his article 'The Sansi Dialect' in 1900, which was published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1901. His effort is admirable. He gave it the name of Criminal Variation, differentiating it from the main Punjabi language of the Sansis. He might be right in this respect as we cannot say with certainty why the Sansis distort the common Punjabi words and render them unintelligible to other people.

Bailey was a missionary of the Church of Scotland. He came into contact with Mr. Ganga Ram Sansi, of the village of Kot Jandoo, tahsil Duska, district Sialkot. Ganga Ram was born in 1877 and embraced christianity in 1895 under the influence of William Scot. He was the first member of the Sansi community to become a Christian. Afterwards he happened to work under Bailey at

1. Sleeman, W.H. Ramaseena pp. 67 to 140. Calcutta, 1836.

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Wazirabad, as an employee of the Scotch Mission. Mr. Bailey learnt the Sansi dialect from Ganga Ram and wrote the article already referred to.

Bailey remained in constant touch with Ganga Ram from 1900 to 1919, when he had to leave for England as his Bungalow at Wazirabad was burnt down by the agitated mob during the upheaval of the Punjab Martial Law in 1919. Although Bailey was fortunate to save his life from the furious mob and fled away to Sialkot, yet he was utterly shocked because his very precious personal library of rare books was burnt down in that arson and the manuscript of the dictionary of the Sansi dialect which he had written was also destroyed at that time, otherwise his contribution to the Sansi dialect would have been much greater than his small article.

On studying the Sansi dialect we will find that it is akin to the Sanskrit language. In actual speech it sometimes resembles Urdu or Hindi, and sometimes Punjabi. Anyhow it is a distorted Punjabi language, with some Sanskrit words. The Punjabi language is very rich in Sanskrit vocabulary as the Aryans first settled in the Punjab and the Vedas were written in this land of the five rivers. Rev. Bailey writes, "The Sansis are a deeply interesting people.....living in the midst of, yet holding aloof from, other races, they invite the attention of the students of etymology and the students of comparative religion alike. But their linguistic interest is paramount. Being criminals they conceal their language with scrupulous care. Many are the stories they tell of the Punjabis and other Europeans who, attempting to become conversant with their speech, relinquished the project with unforeseen magnitude of the task, they had undertaken."[2] Besides Bailey, Kennedy[3], Mohammed Abdul Gafur[4] and Bhargwa[5] have also given a few code words of the Sansi dialect. A perusal of their small lists shows that some of the words given by them are recorded in an incorrect and half-understood way. Abdul Gafur's list is very erroneous.

H.A. Rose writes on the Sansi dialect that it generally resembles Punjabi and even Urdu. He asserts that with a little effort and

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2. Bailey, Rev. T. Grahame. Sansi Dialect, Published in the Journal of the Asiatic society of Bengal Vol. IXX. pp. 7-14. 1901.
3. Kennedy, M. Criminal Classes, pp. 249-250.
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5. Bhargava, B.S.—Criminal Tribes, p. 140. Lucknow, 1949.

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care a Punjabi can understand it easily.[1] There is no doubt that the Sansi dialect is just a variation of Punjabi, having certain words of its own. The present investigations have revealed that the present educated younger generation of the Sansis, does not know it well and the day is not distant when this dialect will disappear. They speak Punjabi and most of the families use current Punjabi in their own homes. It is only in the localities where Sansi families live together that some of them use their private dialect. Otherwise generally the Sansis use it only when they have something to conceal from others. It will facilitate our understanding of the Sansi dialect, if some important words of it are compared with Urdu and Punjabi. Some cognate Sanskrit words are given to show their possible relationship with them.

NOUNS

English	*Urdu*	*Punjabi*	*Sansi*	*Sanskrit*
rice	*chawal*	*chaul*	*tandal*	*tandula*
ghee	*ghee*	*ghee*	*ghee*	*ghrita*
sheep	*bher*	*bhed*	*aidri*	
goat	*bakri*	*chheli*	*chheli*	*chagala*
horse	*ghora*	*ghora*	*kudra*	
mare	*ghori*	*ghori*	*kudri*	
boy	*larka*	*munda*	*bohra*	
girl	*larki*	*kuri*	*bohri*	
woman	*aurat*	*janai*	*barmi*	
mollasses	*gur*	*gur*	*dhoohla*	
matter	*baat*	*baat*	*baie*	
potter (*Kumbar*)	*kumhar*	*kumhar*	*kumbhala*	
donkey	*gadha*	*khota*	*gauna*	
she-donkey	*gadhi*	*khoti*	*gauni*	
house	*ghar*	*ghar*	*khaula*	
theft	*chori*	*chori*	*gaimi, baunti*	
head	*sir*	*sir*	*nhees*	
mouth	*moonh*	*moonh*	*khoom*	
dog	*kutta*	*kutta*	*shookal, bhookhla jhukal*	*suna*

1. Rose, H.A.—Tribes and Castes of Punjab, Vol. III. p. 369.

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English	*Urdu*	*Punjabi*	*Sansi*	*Sanskrit*
cat	*billa*	*billa*	*dhebra*	
ruler or officer	*hakam*	*hakam*	*kokam*	
stick	*lathi*	*dang*	*bengri*	
uncle	*chacha*	*chaacha*	*kaka*	
stranger	*ajanabi*	*opra*	*kaja*	
cow	*gaie*	*gaan*	*laudi*	
buffalo	*bhains*	*majh*	*khimt*	
wheat	*gandam*	*kanak*	*kanak*	
girl	*larki*	*kuri*	*gajeti, mundi*	
boy	*larka*	*munda*	*munda*	
bread	*roti*	*roti*	*timmi*	
water	*paani*	*paani*	*chaein*	
flour	*aatta*	*aatta*	*kota*	
belly	*pait*	*pait*	*pait*	
hands	*haath*	*hath*	*koath*	*hasta*
eye	*aankh*	*akkh*	*kokh*	*aksi*
night	*raat*	*raat*	*lalin, raat*	
day	*din*	*din*	*din*	*dina*
sweeper	*bhangi*	*chuhra*	*gohlia, baila*	
cow	*gai*	*gaan*	*lalsi*	
thief	*chore*	*chore*	*baunt, gaim*	
theft	*chori*	*chori*	*baunti, gaimi*	
shop-keeper	*dukandar*	*hatwanian*	*kini*	
shop	*dukaan*	*hatti*	*koohti*	
dog	*kutta*	*kutta*	*bukhla*	
corn	*anaaj*	*anaaj*	*khisu*	
oilman	*teli*	*teli*	*pirli*	
rupee	*ropaya*	*ropaya*	*balwa*	
cot	*khat*	*manji*	*khat*	
meat	*goshat*	*mass*	*raink*	
shoes	*jooti*	*juti*	*pahni*	*upanaha*
country	*des*	*des*	*des*	*desa*
foreign country	*pardes*	*pardes*	*pardes*	*pradesa*
sun	*suraj*	*suraj*	*suraj*	*surya*
son	*beta*	*putter*	*putter*	*putra*
tree	*darakhat*	*rukh*	*kharukh*	
clothes	*kapre*	*kapre*	*thigre, thegle*	
gold	*sona*	*sona*	*bona*	*suvarna*
goldsmith	*sonar*	*soniara*	*boniara*	*suvarnakar*

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English	*Urdu*	*Punjabi*	*Sansi*	*Sanskrit*
weaver	*jolaha*	*jolaha*	*bulkaha*	
brahman	*brahman*	*bahman*	*jhamak*	
carpenter	*tarkhan*	*tarkhan*	*tukna*	
nose	*naak*	*nak*	*nak*	*nasa*
ear	*kaan*	*kan*	*kan*	*karna*
foot	*paon*	*paeir*	*paan*	*pada*
implement	*hathiar*	*rachh*	*rachh*	
a beating	*maar*	*maar*	*lo*	
lock	*taala*	*jandra*	*behndra*	
well	*koonwan*	*khooh*	*kooa*	*kupa*
god of death	*yam*	*jam*	*jam*	*yama*
iron	*loha*	*loha*	*loha*	*loha*
earth	*dharti*	*dharti*	*dharti*	*dharitri*
fire	*aag*	*agg*	*kog*	*agni*
fuel	*eendhan*	*balan*	*balan*	
hearth	*chulha*	*chuhl*	*chuhl*	
oven	*tanoor*	*tandoor*	*tandoor*	
platter	*parrat*	*parrat*	*parrat*	
cooking pot	*haandi*	*handi*	*khoondi*	
pulses	*daal*	*daal*	*daal*	
wine	*sharab*	*daroo*	*daroo*	
inside	*undder*	*undder*	*kunder*	
man	*aadmi*	*manas*	*manas*	*manushya*
back	*peeth*	*pitth*	*pitth*	*prastha*
sweet	*meetha*	*mittha*	*mittha*	*mistha*
a stranger	*ajnabi*	*opra*	*opra*	
a Sansi man	*Sansi*	*Sansi*	*Bhatu*	
utensil	*bartan*	*bhanda*	*chhanda*	
English man	*sahib*	*sahib*	*nhab*	
neck	*gala*	*gal*	*dhagal*	*gala*
pig	*soor*	*soor*	*tunhda*	
constable	*sipahi*	*sipahi*	*gupahi*	
sub-inspector of police	*thanedar*	*thanedar*	*dhamedar*	
pot herb	*saag*	*saag*	*naag*	*saka*
pudding	*halwa*	*karah*	*karah*	
jackal	*geedar*	*giddar*	*gadar*	
ring	*angoothi*	*mundri*	*khamundri*	*mudra*
box	*sandook*	*sandook*	*nadhook*	
train	*gari*	*gaddi*	*chha gaddi*	*ganth*

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English	*Urdu*	*Punjabi*	*Sansi*	*Sanskrit*
motor	*motor*	*motor*	*khamotor*	
shirt	*kamiz*	*jhagga*	*kha-jhagga*	
turban	*pagri*	*pag*	*chhapag*	
coat	*kot*	*kot*	*chhakot*	
		VERBS		
to eat	*khaana*	*khaana*	*jeemna, dutna, dimna*	
to drink	*peena*	*peena*	*tohgna*	
to run away	*bhagna*	*bhajna*	*binkna*	
to slip away	*khiskna*	*khiskna*	*khinsna*	
to sleep	*sona*	*sauna*	*noonjna*	
to go	*jaana*	*jaana*	*jasarna*	
to come	*aana*	*auna*	*asarna*	
to catch	*pakarna*	*pharna*	*chekarna*	
to take	*lena*	*laina*	*lepna*	
to give	*dena*	*dena*	*depna*	*da*
to sit	*baithna*	*baithna*	*baisna, thaukna,*	*upvisa*
to laugh	*hansna*	*hasna*	*kusarna*	
to weep	*rona*	*rona*	*kheenavna*	
to say	*kaihna*	*kaihna*	*kauhgna*	
to beat	*maarna*	*maarna*	*lona*	
to die	*marna*	*marna*	*lugna*	
to be quiet	*chup kar*	*chup kar*	*bai kool*	
to tie	*bandhna*	*banhna*	*bedhwana*	
to keep	*rakhna*	*rakhna*	*rekhwna*	
to come out	*niklna*	*niklna*	*khiglna*	
to beg	*maangna*	*mangna*	*chengwna*	
to hide or steal	*gumana*	*gumana*	*gumana*	
to see	*dekhna*	*vekhna*	*naukhna*	
to speak	*bolna*	*bolna*	*chulkna*	
to tell	*batana*	*dasna*	*batana*	
to take out	*nikalna*	*kadhna*	*kedhwna*	
to remain	*raihna*	*raihna*	*rauhgna*	
to go	*jana*	*jana*	*gauhgna*	
to send	*bhejna*	*ghalna*	*ghelwna*	
to ask	*poochhna*	*puchhna*	*noochhna*	
to be seen	*dekha*	*dittha*	*khaditha*	

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English	*Urdu*	*Punjabi*	*Sansi*	*Sanskrit*
		TERMS OF RELATIONSHIPS		
mother	*maan*	*maan*	*mauti*	*matri*
father	*baap*	*pio*	*bapta*	
brother	*bhai*	*bhra*	*bhauta*	*bhrata*
sister	*bhain*	*bhain*	*bahan*	*bhagini*
maternal uncle	*mama*	*mama*	*mama*	*mamaka*
mother's father	*naana*	*naana*	*naana*	
mother's mother	*naani*	*naani*	*naani*	
maternal uncle's wife	*maami*	*maami*	*maami*	*mamika*
brother's wife	*bhaabi*	*bharjai*	*bharjai*	*bhratrajaya*
wife	*bahu*	*bahu*	*bahu*	*vadhu*
wife's father	*susar*	*sauhra*	*sauhra*	*sasurashy*
wife's mother	*saas*	*sas*	*sas*	*sasru*
brother's son	*bhateeja*	*bhateeja*	*bhateeja*	*bhratrja*
brother's daughter	*bhateeji*	*bhateeji*	*bhateeji*	
sister's son	*bhanja*	*bhanja*	*bhanaja*	*bhagineya*
sister's daughter	*bhanaji*	*bhanji*	*bhanji*	*bhagineyi*
father's father	*daada*	*daada*	*daada*	
wife's sister	*saali*	*saali*	*saali*	*saali*
wife's brother	*saala*	*saala*	*saala*	*salaka*
husband's elder brother	*jeth*	*jeth*	*jeth*	*jyestha*
husband's younger brother	*deore*	*deore*	*deore*	*devara*
husband's sister	*nanan*	*nanan*	*nanan*	*nanandr*
husband's sister's husband	*nandoia*	*nandoia*	*nandoia*	
		NUMBERS		
one	*ek*	*ikk*	*bek*	*eka*
two	*do*	*do*	*dhore*	
three	*teen*	*tinn*	*teen*	*tri*
four	*chaar*	*chaar*	*chaug*	*catur*

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English	*Urdu*	*Punjabi*	*Sansi*	*Sanskrit*
five	*panch*	*panj*	*nach*	*panch*
six	*chhe*	*chhe*	*nhe*	*sat*
seven	*saat*	*sat*	*nat*	*sapta*
eight	*aath*	*atth*	*koth*	*astha*
nine	*nau*	*nau*	*khanaw*	*nava*
ten	*das*	*das*	*khas*	*dasa*
twenty	*bis*	*veeh*	*khabis*	*vinisali*
thirty	*tees*	*teeh*	*khatis*	*trisat*
forty	*chalees*	*chaali*	*khachaali*	*calva*
fifty	*pachas*	*panjah*	*nachas*	*rinisit*
hundred	*sau*	*sau*	*nhau*	*pancast*
thousand	*hazaar*	*hazaar*	*kongal*	*sala*

PREPOSITIONS

in	*mein*	*vich*	*mahan*	
above	*ooper*	*utan*	*utan*	
with	*saath*	*naal*	*khanaal*	
behind	*peechhe*	*pichhe*	*nichhe*	
near	*nazdik*	*nere*	*khanere*	
front	*aage*	*agge*	*kuge*	
under	*neeche*	*hethan*	*talahn*	
out	*bahar*	*bahar*	*khabahar*	*bahih*

ADJECTIVES

good	*achha*	*changa*	*changa*	
all or whole	*saara*	*saara*	*naara*	
half	*aadha*	*addha*	*kodha*	*ardha*
blind	*andha*	*anha*	*kondhla*	*andha*
bad	*bura*	*bhaira*	*bhaira*	
handsome	*khoobsurat*	*sohna*	*nohna*	
cripple	*luhla*	*luhla*	*khaluhla*	
week	*kamzore*	*maara*	*khamara*	
dear	*laada*	*laada*	*khalada*	
strong	*takatwar*	*tagra*	*khatagra*	
hard	*sakhat*	*dahda*	*khadahda*	
white	*safaid*	*bagga, chitta*	*khachitta*	
			khabagga	
hunch-backed	*kubba*	*kubba*	*chhakubba*	

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English	*Urdu*	*Punjabi*	*Sansi*	*Sanskrit*
dirty	*ganda*	*ganda*	*chhaganda*	
hungry	*bhooka*	*bhukha*	*jhookha*	
ugly	*badsoorat*	*kohja*	*kohja*	
old	*boodha*	*buddha*	*chhooda*	*vrddha*
naked	*nanga*	*nanga*	*khananga*	*nagna*
loose	*dhila*	*dhilla*	*ghadhilla*	*sithila*
jovial	*mauji*	*mauji*	*khamauji*	
talkative	*batooni*	*galri*	*chhagalri*	
dishonest	*beiman*	*beiman*	*khabeiman*	
dumb	*goonga*	*goonga*	*chhagoonga*	
leper	*kohra*	*kohra*	*chhakohra*	
bald	*ganja*	*ganja*	*chha-ganja*	

PRONOUNS

I	*mein*	*mein*	*haun*	*aham*
we	*ham*	*asin*	*ham*	
you	*tum*	*tusin*	*tam*	*tvam*
thou	*tu*	*toon*	*taun*	
your	*tumhara*	*tuhada*	*tuhara*	
our	*hamara*	*sada*	*mhara*	
his	*uska*	*ohda*	*uska*	
mine	*mera*	*mera*	*mera*	
theirs	*unka*	*ohnanda*	*unka*	
this	*yeh*	*eh*	*eh*	
that	*vuh*	*oh*	*oh*	
which	*kaunsa*	*kihra*	*kihra*	
who	*kaun*	*kaun*	*kaun*	
whose	*kiska*	*kidha*	*kiska*	
whom	*jisko*	*jisnun*	*jisko*	

After a close study of these comparative lists of words we may infer that the Sansi dialect is a variation or distortion of the Punjabi language. A great deal of Urdu vocabulary is also found in this dialect. But in spite of this variation it contains some terms peculiarly its own. Therefore the following results are clear :—

1. The nouns of the Sansi dialect are varied and many, in which distortion of Punjabi and Urdu words, its own words and Sanskrit words are found.
2. The majority of verbs is just distortion of Punjabi words and in some cases of Urdu as well.

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3. The numbers are also distortions and variations of Urdu and Punjabi words.

4. In the case of prepositions we also see the same contrivance.

5. The adjectives of the Sansi dialect are dominantly Punjabi words with prefixes of *kh*, just to give them a phonetic twist.

6. The pronunciation closely resembles their Urdu equivalents or they are rather used in true Urdu forms.

The main interest of the Sansi dialect lies in the study of the devices which change the Punjabi or Urdu words, rendering them unintelligible to the masses of the Punjab. On the basis of the above words of different usages we should know the devices of the Sansi dialect, before we study some of its regular specimens and some of its grammatical aspects. One of the greatest difficulties in deciphering the Sansi dialect is the existence of two dialects, side by side, and mixed in use—Punjabi and its Sansi variation. Their code-dialect is marked by two distinct features:

1. A number of words are not found in the Punjabi but they are commonly used in the Sansi dialect.

2. A series of semisystematic changes in already existing words. These changes vary in different types of usages. The same word is sometimes used unchanged, sometimes changed in one way and sometimes changed in another manner. The list of some ways of changing words, is given below :—

i) *s* changed into *n—sahib* into *nab*, *sat* into *nat*.

ii) *s* changed into *nh—saara* into *nhara* (all, whole).

iii) *p* changed into *n—poochhna* into *noochhna* (to ask), *paisa* into *naisa* (a pice).

iv) *a* changed into *k — admi* into *kodmi* (a man) ; *anna* into *kona* (four anna piece); *addha* into *kodha* (half); *atth* into *koth* (eight).

v) *ph* changed into *nh — phita* into *nhita* (doomed).

vi) *bh* changed into *nh — bhi* into *nhi* (then).

vii) *bh* changed into *ch — Bhatu* into *Chhatu* (a Sansi man) ; *bhanda* into *chhanda* (a utensil).

viii) *g* changed into *chh — goonga* into *chhagoonga* (dumb) ; *ganja* into *chhaganja* (bald).

ix) *b* changed into *chh — bola* into *chhabola* (deaf).

x) *n* changed into *kh — niklna* into *khiglna* (to come out).

xi) *r* changed into *kh — raji* into *kharaji* (satisfied); *rukh* into *khurukh* (a tree).

xii) *v* changed into *n — vekhna* into *naukhna* (to see).

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xiii) *d* changed into *kh* — *das* into *khas* (ten).
xiv) *chh* changed into *n* — *chhadna* into *nhodna* (to leave).
xv) *b* changed into *chh* — *buddha* into *chhudha* (old man).
xvi) *m* changed into *kh* — *maara* into *khamara* (weak).
xvii) *n* changed into *kh* — *nanga* into *khananga* (naked).
xviii) *i* changed into *b* — *ikk* into *bek* (one).
xix) *j* changed into *g* — *jaana* into *gaugna* (to go).
xx) *d* changed into *kh* — *ditta* into *khaditta* (gave).
xxi) *k* changed into *l* — *kohna* into *lohna* (to kill).
xxii) *s* changed into *g* — *sipahi* into *gupahi* (a constable).
xxiii) *t* changed into *dh* — *thanedar* into *dhamedar* (a sub-inspector of Police).
xxiv) *g* changed into *dh* — *gal* into *dhagal* (neck).
xxv) *b* changed into *th* — *baithna* into *thaukna* (to sit).
xxvi) *th* changed into *k* — *thanda* into *khathanda* (cold).

Besides these ways of changes some more interesting twists are also worth noticing.

i) The words whose roots end in a vowel have sometimes *p* instead after the root — *dena, depna* (to give); *lena, lepna*; (to take) *hona, hopna* (to be).
ii) The Punjabi verbs whose roots end in *ah* are changed into *aug*; *kaihana, kaughna* (to say); *raihna, raughna* (to remain).
iii) Strangely enough the verbs *aana* becomes *asarna* (to come), *jana* becomes *jasarna* (to go) — The Punjabi word *jana* has two forms in the Sansi dialect; one *jasarna* and the other *gaugna* formed from the word *gaya*, on etymology of *kaughna* and *raughna*.
iv) Some Sansis add *ga* to the end of their dialectical pronouns; *mhara, mharga* (own); *tuhaara, tuhaarga* (your); *mera, merga* (my); *kihra, kihrga* (whose); *jihra, jihrga* (who), etc.
v) Another twist of the Sansi dialect is that in the future tense they change *ga* into *gra* as *mein janga*; *haun jangra* (I will go); *tusin jaoge, taun jangra* (you will go) ; *asin jange, ham jangre* (we will go), etc.
vi) In addressing some one they do use *re* or *ae* in the beginning of the sentences.
vii) *baikool* (be quiet) is their special term which they use when intending to hush up the point at discussion.
viii) *tiari* and *tiara* are strange words which they use extensively as a reference to anything they could think of or talk in the world. *Tiari* is used in the case of the feminine gender and

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tiara is used in the masculine gender; in the neuter gender there is no limit to its use. (They also use tiara for penis and tiari for vulva).

ix) *Special Words* : As given already in the above lists, many words are without any apparent relation to Punjabi and Urdu. There are numerous terms used in the Sansi dialect and their meanings baffle the uninitiated.

As a whole this dialect has been so mixed and distorted that an ordinary Punjabi cannot follow it, but with a little care and effort and through the study of the Sansi dialect it may be intelligible to the Punjabis. After giving the fundamental rules of this language, we can now study some phrases and sentences to make it more understandable to the people.

SENTENCES

(The letters E, U, P and S represent English, Urdu, Punjabi and Sansi respectively.)

1. Where did you go ? (E)
   Aap kahan gae the ? (U)
   Tusin kithe gae sao ? (P)
   Taun kitohar gia sia ? (S)

2. I was tired of walking. (E)
   Mein chal chal kar thuk gia. (U)
   Mein tur tur ke thuk gia. (P)
   Haun turi turi ke thuki gia. (S)

3. Our horse has run away. (E)
   Hamara ghora bhag gia hai. (U)
   Sada ghora bhaj gia hai. (P)
   Mhara kudra binki giae. (S)

4. What does your mother do ? (E)
   Tumhari Maan kia karti hai ? (U)
   Tuhadi Maan ki kardi ae ? (P)
   Tuhari mauti kia koolti ae ? (S)

5. The Sub-Inspector of Police came to our village. (E)
   Hamare gaon men thanedar aiya tha. (U)
   Saade pind thanedar aiya si. (P)

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Mhare gam dhamedar asria sia. (S)

6. Water has dried from the stream. (E)
Nadi ka pani khushak ho gia hai. (U)
Nadi da pani suk giae. (P)
Khanadia ka pani sukh giae (S)

7. My brother-in-law has joined army. (E)
Mera sala fauj men bharti ho gia hai. (U)
Mera sala fauj vich bharti ho gia ae. (P)
Mera sala fauja mahan bharti hoi giae. (S)

8. My sister-in-law is very beautiful. (E)
Meri sali bahut khoobsoorat hai. (U)
Meri sali bari sohni en. (P)
Meri sali khabari nohni en. (S)

9. My grandfather is very old. (E)
Mera daada bara boorha hai. (U)
Mera dadda bara buddha ae. (P)
Mera daada khabara chhooda aie. (S)

10. Clean the utensils. (E)
Bartan saaf kar do. (U)
Bhande saaf kar deo. (P)
Chhande saaf kari deo. (S)

11. Our boy has become angry. (E)
Hamara larka rooth gia hai. (U)
Saada munda russ gia ae. (P)
Mahara moonda russi gia ae. (S)

12. I have taken my food. (E)
Mein khana kha chuka hoon. (U)
Mein roti kha lai hai. (P)
Haun nook timi lai ae. (S)

13. Spread the shirt for drying. (E)
Kamiz sookhne dall do. (U)
Jhagga sukne pa deo. (P)
Khajha-gga sukne bah deo. (S)

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14. Our teacher beats the boys. (E)
Hamara ustad larkon ko maarta hai. (U)
Saada munshi mundian noon marda ae. (P)
Mhara munshi bohren ko lota ae. (S)

15. The English committed cruelties on their subjects. (E)
Angrez rayat par zulam karte the. (U)
Angrez rayat te zulam karde san. (P)
Angrez rayata par zulam koolte theae. (S)

16. The thief has slipped away. (E)
Chor khisak gia hai. (U)
Chore khisak gia hai. (P)
Gaim khinsi gia ae. (S)

17. His son has grown up. (E)
Uska larka jawan ho gia hai. (U)
Usda munda jawan ho gia hai. (P)
Uska gajeta jawan hopi gia ae. (S)

18. The police has come. (E)
Police aa gai hai. (U)
Police aa gai ae. (P)
Nulse asari gai ae. (S)

19. He is riding on a donkey. (E)
Vuh gadhe par baitha hai. (U)
Oh khote te baitha ae. (P)
Oh gaune par baisia ae. (S)

20. Bring money from the shop. (E)
Dukan se paise lao. (U)
Hatti ton paise lia. (P)
Koohtia ton dokle liasar. (S)

21. My brother's marriage comes off in the month of Savan. (E)
Mere bhai ki shadi Sawan ke mahine mein hogi. (U)
Mere bhra da viah saun de mahine vich hovega. (P)
Mere bhaute ka chhiah Saun ke mahine mahan hog. (S)

22. Be quiet, we will talk again. (E)
Chup karo, ham phir baat karenge. (U)

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Chup karo, asin phir gal karenge. (P)
Bai koolo, bhi bai koolang. (S)

23. The Jats have eaten our goats and we will steal their buffalo.(E)
Jaton ne hamari bakrian kha li hain aur ham unki bhains chura laenge. (U)
Jattan saadian bakrian kha laian ne te asin ohnan di majh luka lavange. (P)
Kajjon ne mharian aidrian duti nhodian ne, te ham unki khimt gumai lepang. (S)

24. The thief took to his heels and a hue and cry was raised in the village. (E)
Chor daur gia aur saare gaon mein shore mach gia. (U)
Chor bhajgia te saare pind vich raula mach gia. (P)
Baunt binki gia te nhare gama mhan raula machi gia. (S)

25. Send the boys to school, they will learn wisdom. (E)
Larkon ko skool bhejo aur vuh akal sikhenge. (U)
Mundian noo sakool ghalo oh matsudh sikhange. (P)
Moondon ko sakool ghelvo matsudh sikhinge. (S)

26. The famine has fallen in the country. (E)
Mulk mein kahet par gia hai. (U)
Des vich kall pai gia hai. (P)
Desa mahan kal pari giae. (S)

After studying the sentences of Sansi dialect in comparison with the sentences of English, Urdu and Punjabi, we should study now the Sansi dialect in continuous paras. During investigations an old Sansi, above ninety years, sighingly narrated his sorrow to the author as a response to a query and his actual narration is given below (Letters S & P signify Sansi and Punjabi respectively).

"Oh moonde haun tanu kia bataen ; Bhatuen wali gal ee koghi (S)
"O Mundia mein tanun ki dassan ; Sansian wali gal ee koi (P)
Nahin rahigai. Ham kadi Rajput Raje siae. Mhara bada (S)
nahi rahgai. Asin kadi Rajput Raje saan. Saada vadda (P)
Raja Sansmal sia. Mera daada manon butata thia ke ham (S)
Raja Sansmal si. Mera daada manon dasda si ke sasin (P)
Chandarvansi Bhatti Rajput thiae, hukam Rabba ka mhare baderon sath kisi (S)

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Chandarvansi Bhatti Rajput saan, hukam Rab da saade vaddian nall kise (P)

horia ki larie hoi gai. Mhare badere nassi ke junglan (S)
hori di larie ho gai. Saada vadde nas ke junglan (P)

Mahan turi gai. Bhi koolte kia khadin te tapane ee (S)
zich tur gae. Phir karde ki din te tapane ee (P)

thaia Jhukhe lugne lagge te junglan ke janwar dutione (S)
san. Bhukhe maran lagge te junglan de janwar khadione. (P)

Junglen mahan maldangar bhi charate raugte thiae. Aidrian (S)
Junglen vich maldangar vi charde rahnde san. Bhedan (P)

Laudian te gaunian rekhavde san. Shooklen te rachhen (S)
gaien te khotian rakhe san. Kuttian te rachhan (P)

sath janwar loi ke deemte thiaee Hore kia koolte, pait (S)
naal janwar maar ke khande san. Hore ki karde, pait (P)

te bharna ee sia ? Bhi mhare desa mahan Angrej aie gai. (S)
te bharna ee si ? Phir saade des vich Angrej aa gai. (P)

Mhakon Angrej ne jaraim peshe ke kanoona mahan bedhvi (S)
Saanon Angrej ne jaraim peshe de kanoon vich banh (P)

deehna. Mhari te bin gunshan isi kannoona ki kaida mahan (S)
ditta. Saadi tee bin gunahan ise kanoon di kaid vich (P)

umar ee langhi gai ae. Ham te ib aakhri sahan par hain. (S)
umar ee langh gai ae. Asin te hun akhri sahan te haan. (P)

Mhare Bohre kaugte ain ib jaraim peshe ka kanoon tutti (S)
Saade munde kahnde ne hun jaraim peshe da kanoon tutt (P)

gia ae. Chalo ham nahin te mhare puttar potre te (S)
gia ae. Chalo asin nahin te saade puttar potre te (P)

banden mahan ginen jangre." (S)
bandian vich ginen jange." (P)

It is useful to translate the above narrative into English, sentence-wise : "O boy, what should I tell you. Nothing is left worth telling about the Sansis. Once we were Rajput Rajas. Our ancestor was Raja Sansmal. My grandfather used to tell me that we were Chandrawansi Rajputs. As God willed, a war broke out between our ancestors and some other people. Our ancestors fled to the jungles. What else could they do as the time had to be passed. They ate wild animals, when starved. They used to graze and keep sheep, cows and donkeys in the jungles also. With the help of dogs and arms they used to kill and eat

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the wild animals. What else was then to do, they had to fill their belly ? Then the English came to our country. They tied us with the Criminal Tribes Act. Without any faults, our life has passed under the imprisonment through this Act. Now we are at our last gasp. Our boys talk that the Criminal Tribes Act has been repealed. Well, if we are not, our sons and grandsons, will be counted among human beings."

Rev. Grahame Bailey has also given a narration of the Sansi dialect in his article, which is worth referring to.

The above illustrations of the Sansi dialect have clearly proved that it is not separate from the Punjabi language. Although the way of speech is like Urdu, yet the vocabulary is almost entirely Punjabi, with the exception of some words of its own. But the distortions are so varied that it demands diligence to understand it properly. Even today the words like *bora* (boy), *thegli* (a garment), *bhatu* and *bhatani*, are in every-day use in the speech of Bhatneri, a Bhatiani language of Rajasthan. This can well be seen from the account of the Bhatiani language given by Dr. Grierson.[7] In his work he has discussed the Punjabi[8] language also. He classified Punjabi into different dialects and Bhatiani is one of them. It is notable that in 1824 the Christian Missionaries of Serampur translated the New Testament into this language which they called Bhatneri (i.e., related to Bhatner) language.

After conversing with many Sansis of different parts of India, one reaches the conclusion that the Sansis of all parts of India understand the dialect under discussion, in spite of centuries of stay in different parts of the country and under different influences of cultures and languages. This strongly proves that all the Sansis were once the inhabitants of the Punjab, Bhatner and its surrounding territories in Rajasthan. Their ancestors were, like other Punjabis, once a Sanskrit-speaking people.

GRAMMAR OF SANSI DIALECT

After understanding some important aspects of this dialect we can now discuss its grammar. The grammar of this language resembles entirely the grammar of Punjabi and Urdu languages.

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7. Grierson. A.—Linguistic Survey of of India, Vol. 9, Pt. I. p. 734.
8. Ibid., pp. 704-824.

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Present Tense

(The letters E, U, P and S represent English, Urdu, Punjabi and Sansi respectively)

1. You are. (E) *Tum ho.* (U) *Tusin ho.* (P) *Taun haen.* (S)
2. I am. (E) *Main hoon.* (U) *Main haan.* (P) *Haun en.* (S)
3. He is. (E) *Vuh hai.* (U) *Oh ae.* (P) *Oh ae.* (S)
4. They are. (E) *Vuh hain.* (U) *Oh ne.* (P) *Oh en.* (S)
5. We are. (E) *Ham hain.* (U) *Asin haan.* (P) *Ham en.* (S)

Sentences in Tenses

Present indefinite :

I go. (E) *Main jata hoon.* (U) *Mein janda haan.* (P) *Haun jasartan* (S)
You go. (E) *Tum jate ho.* (U) *Tusin jande ho.* (P) *Tam jasarteho.* (S)
He goes. (E) *Voh jata hae.* (U) *Oh janda eh.* (P) *Oh jasarta ae.* (S)
They go. (E) *Voh jate hain.* (U) *Oh jande ne.* (P) *Oh jasarte ain.* (S)

Present Continuous :

You are going. (E) *Aap ja rahe hain.* (U) *Tusin ja rahe ho.* (P) *Tam jasarte ho.* (S)
We are going. (E) *Ham jarahe hain.* (U) *Asan jarahe hean.* (P) *Ham jasarte hain.* (S)

Present Perfect :

We have eaten. (E) *Ham kha chuke hain.* (U) *Asin kha liya hai.* (P) *Hamon dooti liya ae.* (S)
The potter has died. (E) *Kumar mar gia hae.* (U) *Kumhar mar gia ae.* (P) *Kumbhla luggi gia ae.* (S)

Past Indefinite :

He went. (E) *Vuh gia.* (U) *Oh gia.* (P) *Oh gaugia.* (S)

Past Continuous :

She was going. (E) *Vuh ja rahi thi.* (U) *Oh ja rahi si.* (P) *Oh jasarti thi.* (S)

Past Perfect :

She had slept. (E) *Vo so chuki thi.* (U) *Oh saun chuki si.* (P) *Oh noonj gaugi thi.* (S)

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Future Tense

Future Indefinite :

You will go. (E) *Tum jao ge.* (U) *Tusin jao ge.* (P) *Tam jasaroge.* (S)
I will go. (E) *Mein jaoonga.*(U) *Mein jawanga.* (P) *Haun jasrangra.* (S)

Future Perfect :

They will have gone.. (E) *Vuh ja chuke honge.* (U) *Oh ja chuke hon ge.* (P) *Oh jasri gai hongre.* (S)

Future Perfect Continuous :

He will have been going. (E) *Vuh jata raha hoga.* (U) *Oh janda riha hovega.* (P) *Oh jasarta riha hogra.* (S)

Interrogatives :

What do you do ? (E) *Aap kia karte hain* ? (U) *Tusin ki karde ho* ? (P) *Tam kia kulte ho* ? (S)
Has he grown old ? (E) *Kia vuh boorha ho gia hai* ? (U) *Ki oh buddha ho gia hae* ? (P) *Kia oh chhuda hopi gia ae* ? (S)

SINGULARS AND PLURALS

Words in English	*Urdu*		*Punjabi*		*Sansi*	
	Singular	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
boy	*larka*	*larka*	*munda*	*munde*	*bohra*	*bohre*
girl	*larki*	*larkian*	*kuri*	*kurian*	*bohri*	*bohrian*
mare	*ghori*	*ghorian*	*ghori*	*ghorian*	*kudri*	*kudrian*
pig	*soor*	*soor*	*soor*	*soor*	*tundha*	*tuhdne*
sheep	*bher*	*bheren*	*bhed*	*bhedan*	*aidri*	*aidrian*
buffalo	*bhains*	*bhainsen*	*majh*	*majhen*	*khimt*	*khimtan*
utensil	*bartan*	*bartan*	*bhanda*	*bhande*	*chhanda*	*chhande*
rupee	*rupiya*	*rupaie*	*rupiya*	*rupaie*	*balwa*	*balve*
shoe	*jooti*	*jootian*	*jutti*	*juttian*	*pahani*	*pahanin*
bread	*chapati*	*chapatian*	*roti*	*rotian*	*timi*	*timian*

CASE

Here we may also discuss something about the declension or case-ending of the noun 'father' and different forms of personal

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pronoun 'he' and 'you' in different cases, illustrating them with sentences.

1. *Nominative Case* (father) :
   Father did it. (E) *Ise baap ne kiya.* (U) *Aeh peo ne keeta.* (P) *Ah khabap ne kulia.* (S)
2. *Objective case* (to father) :
   He gave a rupee to father. (E) *Usne baap ko ek rupiya diya.* (U) *Is ne peonoon ikk rupiya ditta.* (P) *In khabapa ko bek balwa deehna.* (S)
3. Instrumental Case (by father) :
   It was done by father. (E) *Yeh baap se hua.* (U) *Eh peo ton hoiya.* (P) *Ae khabappa ton hopia.* (S)
4. *Dative Case* (to father) :
   He spoke to father. (E) *Usne baap ko kaha.* (U) *Usne peo noon akhiya.* (P) *Un khabapa ko kaugia.* (S)
5. *Ablative Case* (from father) :
   He came from father. (E) *Vuh baap se aiya.* (U) *Oh peo kolon aiya.* (P) *Oh khabapa thon asariya.* (S)
6. *Genitive Case* (of father) :
   Bring clothes of father. (E) *Baap ke kapre lao.* (U) *Peo de kapre liya.* (P) *Khabapa ke thegle liasar.* (S)
7. *Locative Case* (in father) :
   What is the fault in father? (E) *Baap mein kia kasur bai.* (U) *Peo vich ki dos hae ?* (P) *Khabapa mahan kia khados ae?* (S)
8. *Absolute Case* (O, father) :
   O, father, see it (E) *Aie, baap ise dekh.* (U) *O, peo, ehnoon wekh.* (P) *O, khabap iskon naukh.* (S)

FORMS OF PERSONAL PRONOUN IN DIFFERENT CASES

FIRST PERSON

Name of case	Sansi	Punjabi	Urdu	Sansi	Punjabi	Urdu
	Singular			Plural		
Nominative	*haun*	*mein*	*mein*	*ham*	*asin*	*ham*
Objective	*manon*	*mainon*	*mujhe*	*mhakon*	*sanoon*	*hamen*
Instrumental	*mishe*	*methon*	*mujhse*	*hamthe*	*sathon*	*hamse*
Dative	*manon*	*mainon*	*mujhko*	*mhakon*	*sanoon*	*hamko*
Ablative	*misthon*	*mereton*	*mujhse*	*mhathon*	*sathon*	*hamse*
Genitive	*mera*	*mera*	*mera*	*mhar*	*saada*	*hamara*
Locative	*mere-mahan*	*mere-vich*	*mujh-men*	*mhare-mahan*	*saade-vich*	*ham-men*

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SECOND PERSON

Nominative	*taun*	*toon*	*tu*	*taun*	*tusin*	*tum*
Objective	*tanon*	*tenon*	*tujhe*	*tamkon*	*tuhanoon*	*tumhen*
Instrumental	*tisthe*	*tere ton*	*tujhse*	*tamthon*	*tuhadeton*	*tumse*
Dative	*tiskon*	*tenon*	*tujhko*	*tamkon*	*tuhanoon*	*tumko*
Ablative	*tiston*	*tereton*	*tujhse*	*tamthon*	*tereton*	*tumse*
Genitive	*tera*	*tera*	*tera*	*tamka*	*tuhada*	*tumka*
Locative	*tere mahan*	*terevich*	*tujhmen*	*tuhare mahan*	*tuhade-vich*	*tum-mein*

THIRD PERSON

Nominative	*un*	*us*	*us*	*unon*	*uhnan*	*unhon*
Objective	*iskon*	*isnoon*	*isko*	*unko*	*ohnan noon*	*unki*
Instrumental	*isthe*	*iston*	*issae*	*inthon*	*ihnan ton*	*inhon se*
Dative	*iskon*	*ihnoon*	*isko*	*inkon*	*ihnan noon*	*inko*
Ablative	*isthon*	*ihde ton*	*isse*	*inthon*	*ihnanton*	*inhon ne*
Genitive	*iska*	*ihda*	*iska*	*inka*	*inhanda*	*inhan ka*
Locative	*is mahan*	*ihde vich*	*is mein*	*in mahan*	*ihnan vich*	*inhon mein*

PRONUNCIATION

Now there is not much left to be said about the pronunciation of this dialect, as one can learn its pronunciation just by studying the ways in which the Punjabi words are changed or partly changed. The vowel sounds are the same as in Punjabi. The consonants do vary, but just to give a proper sound to the gutturally pronounced aspirants. In Punjabi the initial *jh*, *gh*, *bh*, *dh* have entirely distinct pronunciations from those which they receive in Hindi and Urdu. For instance, *jh* in the word *jharoo* (broom) in Punjabi is pronounced in a different way from its pronunciation of the word *jharoo* in Urdu. Another notable fact is that these sounds are pronounced differently in Punjabi and Urdu when they occur at the beginning or at the end of the same words. The sound *bh* is pronounced in Punjabi in the word *bhali* (good) in a different way than it is pronounced when it comes in the end of a word like *labhi* or *labh* (found or find), and this is the case with other sounds *jh*, *gh* and *dh* also. These sounds are pronounced in the Punjabi way in the Sansi dialect and they never assume the Urdu style of pronunciation.

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CHAPTER SIX

DEMOGRAPHY OF SANSIS

"Whatever comes, this too shall pass away."

—ELIA WHEELER WILCOX.

THE SIZE and constitution of the population of a community affects its all aspects of life. The inaccuracy of vital statistics of India is proverbially notorious. If the vital statistics of India as a whole are inaccurate then one can easily imagine what gross inaccuracies there will be in the statistics of the nomadic people who remained wandering for several centuries. Therefore, the vital statistics of the Sansis and other De-notified tribes of India are utterly inaccurate. Some of the causes of the inaccuracy of their vital statistics are given below :

1. At the time of early censuses of the Punjab (1855 & 1868) most of them might be engaged in a nomadic life.
2. Some vagrant people stated different castes in different states and in different situations, accompanied by changes in names as well.
3. The appellation 'Criminal Tribe' was sufficient to make an enumerator indifferent to going into the details of the accurate and exact statements of these people.

It is strange that the population figures of the Sansis differ in different publications regarding the same year. So much so that even their figures differ in the census reports. In the Census Report of Punjab for 1931[1] the censuswise variations of the population of the Sansis of the Punjab are given from 1881 to 1931, but it is surprising that the total population of Sansis of the Punjab in 1931 is given as 28,262. This figure neither tallies with the total Sansi population of the British territory nor with that of Punjab States, nor with the total population of the province, i. e., 33,228, as recorded in the Census Report of 1931.

The present records are also full of errors and misleading figures. In the Census Report of Punjab for 1881[2], the population

1. Vol. II, p. 304, Table XVIII.
2. Vol. III, p. 20, Table VIII A.

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of Sansis is 32 in Bilaspur but in the census report for 1931[1], the population of Sansis in Bilaspur is nil. I have met many Sansis of Bilaspur and other parts of Himachal Pradesh, who are living there. They tell that since several generations they have been living in these states undisturbed in the places where they are residing at present. As a matter of fact, the population of Sansis, 32 in Bilaspur, as recorded in 1881, would have increased to some hundreds by 1931, the year which shows their population to be nil. After 1931, the castewise figures are not available. However, vital statistics of the Sansis are found in the reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Government of India. In the report of the Commissioner[2], we find the total population of Sansis recorded as only three in all the States of Himachal Pradesh. The Sansis of Himachal Pradesh have not been affected at all by the partition of the province. Therefore, if their population was 32 in 1881 they must by now have become several hundreds and they are actually so. Hence there is a large amount of inaccuracy in the vital statistics of the Sansis.

In the census of 1951 no castewise population figures were recorded but in the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes[3], we find the population of Sansis 15,000 and 3,114 in the Punjab and in Pepsu respectively. So according to this report the total population of the Sansis in the present Punjab (East Punjab and Pepsu merged) is only 18,114.

Before going further, we should examine the population of the Sansis and their distribution in different parts of India, on the basis of the figures found in the aforesaid report.

Sansi Population and its Distribution in India

Name of State	*Population*
Ajmer	2,302
Delhi	622
Himachal Pradesh	3
Madhya Bharat	2,267
Pepsu	3,114
Punjab	15,000
Rajasthan	29,210
Uttar Pradesh	999
Total	53,517

1. Part II, p. 299, Table XVII.
2. Vol. II, 1956, p. 152.
3. Vol. II, 1956.

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According to the population figures of the De-notified Tribes of India as a whole, recorded as 22,68,348 by the Government of India[1], the percentage of the total population of the Sansis found in the whole of India to the total population of all the De-notified Tribes, is 2.3%. The above figures do not seem to be reliable and the present population of the Sansis is above 3 lakhs in India and more than half live in the Punjab alone.

The Census Report for 1881 is the first available record which gives population figures and the distribution of the Sansis in different parts of the Punjab. From 1881 to 1931, all the five Census Reports contain the population figures of these people. Hence their population figures as recorded in the Census Report of 1881[2] are :

Total of British Territory, 19,035 (Males, 10,464; Females, 8,571)
Total of Native States, 2,274 (Males, 1,216; Females, 1,058)
Total of the Province, 21,309

1. A close examination of the figures of the census of the Sansis of Punjab in 1881, shows that in the British Territory, Amritsar stands at the top of all the other districts regarding the population of the Sansis. The district of Gujranwala comes second and the third is Lahore in this respect. The districts of Amritsar, Gujranwala and Lahore were the centres of political power and influence of great Maharaja Ranjit Singh and it is in these districts that the Sansis settled in the largest numbers. They were patronised by the Jats whose ancestors were related to their ancestors as we read about the relations of the Sansis and the Jats, "They are the genealogists of many of the Jat Tribes and were accordingly admitted by them to terms of something like familiarity."[3] Familiarity is ancestral continuing from generation to generation.

2. Even among the eleven administrative divisions of the British territory of the Punjab the divisions of Amritsar and Lahore stand first and second respectively in the case of Sansi population for 1881.

3. It is also clear that in the native states the Sansi population is only 10.6 of its total population in the province and among all the native states, Patiala has the largest number of Sansis.

4. It is also clear that the States of Eastern plains possess

1. *Social Welfare*, P. 505.
2. Vol. II, p. 32, Table VIII A.
3. Ibbetson, *Outline of Punjab Ethnography*, Part VIII, p. 154.

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the maximum population of the Sansis and the Hill States now mostly included in Himachal Pradesh have a very meagre population among the native states.

Before studying the population of Sansis in comparison with different decades from 1881 to 1931, we quote below the population of the Sansis in Punjab in 1931.[1]

Total of British Territory	..	29,552
Total of Native States	..	3,676
Total of Province	..	33,228

Geographically some important changes occurred in the Census Report of 1931. Delhi, Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat and Hazara were excluded from the area of the Punjab. The districts excluded from the Punjab were named North Western Frontier Province, but they did not have a considerable population of the Sansis. On the whole, the Sansi population in the Punjab remained unaffected. Therefore the geographical distribution of Sansi population in Punjab States and the British Territory in 1931 is almost the same as it was in 1881. The trend towards Islam has decreased but the trend towards Sikhism appears to be considerably increasing in 1931.

In order to get an exact appreciation of the growth or otherwise of the Sansis we consider in the table on the next page the figures of the decade-wise variations of their population from 1881 to 1931 in comparison with some other communities of the punjab as given in the Census Report of 1931.[2]

The absolute uniformity of variations of populations of different communities is not possible in nature, but even then the table shows that the growth of the Sansis is approximately like that of some other communities of the Punjab. It may be pointed out that for 1931 and 1881 corrected figures are given in the tables as in the variation tables there is a discrepancy in them.

Sex Ratio

The sex ratio of different communities is known to vary in different countries and the sex ratio of India has been known to be adverse, leading to the use of such terms as masculinity index by the Census Commissioners. The following table presents the relevant data of sex ratio of Sansis in comparison with some other communi-

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1. *Census Report of Punjab*, Vol. II, 299, Table XVII.
2. *The Census Report of the Punjab* 1931, p. 304, part II, Table XVIII.

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Year	Names of Communities					
	Bawaria	*Harni*	*Jat*	*Sansi*	*Brahman*	*Pakhiwara*
1881	22013	1318	4223885	21309	1040771	3741
1891	26420	4157	4500340	22218	1069132	3674
Variations from 1881 to 1891	+4407 +20.01%	+2839 ...	+276455 +6.54%	+2289 +4.24%	+28361 +2.73%	—67 —1.79%
1901	29112	3462	4884285	26000	1077252	3595
Variations from 1891 to 1901	+2692 +10.19%	—695 —16.71%	+383945 +8.53%	+3782 +17.02%	+8120 +0.76%	—79 —2.14%
1911	32849	3360	4891060	24439	985901	3711
Variations from 1901 to 1911	+3737 +12.83%	—102 —2.95%	+6775 +0.13%	—1561 —6.00%	—88008 —8.17%	+116 +3.22%
1921	34807	2988	5453747	29272	994529	2801
Variations from 1911 to 1921	+1958 +5.96%	—372 —11.09%	+562687 +11.54%	+4833 +12.42%	+8628 +0.87%	—910 +24.52%
1931	32508	3387	6070032	33228	1058598	3100
Variations from 1921 to 1931	—2299 —6.83%	+339 +13.35%	+616285 +11.48%	+3956 +13.51%	+64069 +6.43%	+299 +10.67%

+ indicates increase ; — indicates decrease

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ties of Punjab as recorded in the Census Report of 1931[1] :

Caste		*Number of Females per 1000 Males.*
Sansi	...	823
Jat	...	803
Harni	...	690
Bawaria	...	920
Arora	...	865
Rajput	...	850
Khatri	...	819
Tarkhan	...	836
Kumhar	...	850

It is seen from the above table that the sex ratio among the Sansis is like that of the most of the communities of the Punjab showing dearth of females. But even in that dearth the Sansis are much better than the Jats, the Harnis and the Khatris.

Civil Condition of Sansis

The civil condition of a community reveals its homely and marital life. It gives the idea of its rate of marriage, number of married and unmarried persons and widowed males and females at different ages. Among the Sansis the remarriage of widows presents a serious social problem, if suitable relatives are not prepared to marry a widow. The figures of widowed persons are quite high. In the Census Report of 1931 the civil condition of Indian people was recorded and the castewise figures are available. The figures of the civil condition of the Sansis of the Punjab as recorded in the Census Report of 1931[2] are given below. The figures are separate for the males and females showing their civil condition per 1000 persons at different ages:

Females

Age	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Widowed*
All ages	467	435	98
0—6	997	3	—
7—13	915	83	2
14—16	465	533	2
17—23	99	888	13
24—43	38	866	13
44 and over	10	468	522

1. ibid., Chapter V, p. 61.
2. ibid., pp. 149, 150, Table VIII.

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MALES

Age	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Widowed*
All ages	532	281	87
0—6	996	4	—
7—13	957	41	2
14—16	760	232	8
17—23	465	513	22
24—43	137	749	144
44 and over	46	627	327

The above table shows that both early marriage and widow problems exist in the Sansi society. The whole of the Sansi population was dealt with as Hindu in these figures. From these figures it is clear that in the case of male Sansis, the maximum married persons are found between the ages of 24 to 43, but in case of females the maximum number of married women occurs from 17 to 23 years. Another fact is that in this respect the Sansis are one of the backward communities of the Punjab because the early marriage from the age of 0—6 is 4 in males and 3 in females. A comparison of the social evil of early marriage among the Sansis with some other castes of Punjab will be interesting as given in the Census Report of 1931[1], and is shown below :

Caste	*Age*	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Widowed*
Sansi	0—6	996	4	nil
Lohar	,,	996	4	nil
Tarkhan	,,	997	3	nil
Jat (Hindu)	,,	997	3	nil
Gujjar	,,	996	4	nil
Julaha	,,	996	4	nil
Kanet	,,	981	19	nil
Dagi or Koli	,,	980	20	nil

In case of early marriage, another comparison of the different castes of the Punjab will also be useful to assess the civil condition of the Sansis for all ages, as recorded in the Census Report of 1931.[2]

(Figures showing the number per 1000)

Age	*Caste*	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Widowed*
All ages	Sansi	532	381	87
,,	Jat (Hindu)	493	411	96
,,	Jat (Sikh)	555	349	96

1. ibid.
2. ibid.

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Age	*Caste*	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Widowed*
All Ages	Jat (Muslims)	573	367	60
,,	Khatri (Hindu)	568	365	67
,,	Khatri (Sikh)	550	377	73
,,	Dagi or Koli	427	507	66
,,	Kanet	445	485	70
,,	Lohar	495	418	87
,,	Tarkhan	501	401	98
,,	Brahman	437	364	99

Thus the Sansis of the Punjab come under the general range of the civil condition of the Punjabis. But one thing is peculiar that at the age of 44 and over, there is a great excess of widow females over the number of the widowers of the same age (Males 327, Females 522). These disproportionate figures are due to some social causes. In the backward Sansi families there is a great influence and control of the tribal panchayat. According to the rigid rules of the Sansi Panchayat a widow cannot remarry except with the real or step-brother of her deceased husband. If the deceased husband had no real or step-brother, then anybody having an equality of relation with the deceased but of the same clan could marry her, with the sanction of the Panchayat. But the range of relationship is never allowed to be infringed ; the new husband should be a brother of the dead husband. If the parents of the widow want to remarry their widowed daughter anywhere else, they cannot do so without paying a heavy sum of money to the brothers, step-brothers or the clan-fellows of their dead son-in-law. So in case of the brothers of the dead husband being already married, they cannot marry the widow sister-in-law (*bhabi*). They permit her to marry with their any clan-brother (*shareek*). To marry anywhere else, the parents of the widow cannot pay heavy amount of money, in most of the cases. Being an aged woman (44 or above) she may have some children by her deceased husband, who are to be fed by the new husband. So he is generally reluctant to shoulder this heavy responsibility. Thus many Sansi widows remain widows for ever and due to these causes the number of widows at the age of 44 or above is very high as compared with the widowers of the same age.

We have discussed the comparative civil condition of Sansis per 1000 persons of either sex. Now it will be more interesting to see the civil condition of the whole of the population of Sansis

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of Punjab on the basis of sex and different age-groups as recorded in the Census Report of 1931.[1]

CIVIL CONDITION OF SANSIS BY SEX AND AGE, 1931

Total population dealt with

Males = 14,628

Females = 12,037

Caste or Tribe	*Sex*	*Total*	*0-6*	*7-13*	*14-16*	*17-23*	*24-43*	*44 & above*
			UNMARRIED					
Sansi	Male	7,789	3,110	2,532	735	781	521	119
,,	Female	6,519	2,918	2,068	364	140	113	16
			MARRIED					
Sansi	Male	5,559	13	108	224	861	2,853	1,500
,,	Female	5,237	8	188	417	1,256	2,587	781
			WIDOWED					
Sansi	Male	1,271	nil	5	8	36	434	788
,,	Female	1,181	nil	4	2	19	286	870

AGE-GROUPS

Sex	*0-6*	*7-13*	*14-16*	*17-23*	*24-43*	*44 and over*	*Total*
Male	3,123	2,645	967	1,678	3,808	2,398	14,619
Female	2,926	2,260	783	1,415	2,986	1,667	12,037

I have studied 600 persons of each sex in different parts of the Punjab and their classification of age-groups, is given below :—

Age-group	*Males*	*Females*
0-10	168	176
10-20	125	124

1. ibid., Table VII, page 148.

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Age-group	*Males*	*Females*
20-30	106	111
30-40	86	82
40-50	58	54
50-60	34	33
60-70	16	15
70 and above	7	5
	600	600

These statistics show that in the first ten years of age the females are more than the males and as the former advance in age their proportional number decreases. This trend in age-groups is found almost in all the communities and in all parts of India. This is why, on the whole, like other Indians, the Sansis are also in scarcity of women. In the end it may be concluded that the population problems of the Sansis of Punjab are just like those of the other people of the Province.

A Demographic Study of the Sansis settled at Delhi

Although Punjab is the main province of the population of the Sansis yet they are not found there settled in large habitations exclusively. However, as a single locality and comparatively, Delhi contains the largest population of Sansis in Northern India, which has especially increased after the partition of Punjab in 1947 because hundreds of families have settled there which were uprooted from the West Pakistan. Besides West Pakistan several Sansi families of other Indian Provinces have also settled in the capital of India. Therefore Delhi offers a good opportunity where one could study a large population of these people. I have collected the data personally enquiring from family to family in the colonies in which they have settled. The data were collected in the months of January, February and March, 1962. The data are analysed under the following heads :

1. Age-groups

(*See Table on next page*)

2. Source Places of Migration

It has already been mentioned that most of the families have migrated to Delhi a decade or so ago. Hence it will be interesting to note their original districts and the number of

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Sl. No.	Name of Colony	Total No. of Families	Total No. of Members	M	F	AGE-GROUPS 0-4		5-7		8-21		22-40		41-70		Above 70	
						M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	Kasturba Nagar	120	728	368	360	83	85	82	37	105	99	92	94	40	39	6	6
2	Majnoon Tila	64	324	153	171	32	52	21	13	33	44	44	40	18	18	5	4
3	Amritkaur Puri	74	355	165	190	41	54	16	22	37	50	52	48	14	12	5	4
4	Rameshwari Nagar	30	216	108	108	31	26	15	6	27	39	18	26	17	11	—	—
5	Prasad Nagar	30	138	73	65	10	11	7	6	28	27	18	15	9	5	1	1
6	Prem Nagar	39	183	99	84	19	23	14	9	34	22	24	21	8	9	—	—
7	Moti Nagar	19	130	67	63	13	17	10	5	25	23	12	12	7	6	—	—
8	Tihar	3	22	15	7	5	1	3	—	3	3	4	2	—	1	—	—
9	Andha Mughal	124	670	358	312	92	59	47	40	92	89	78	77	38	39	11	8
10	H. Block (Andha-Mughal)	23	124	65	59	20	14	3	15	16	13	22	15	3	2	1	—
11	Naya Bazar	1	7	3	4	1	1	—	—	—	1	1	2	1	—	—	—
12	New Rajinder Nagar	1	4	2	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Grand Total	528	2901	1476	1425	348	344	178	153	400	410	366	353	155	142	29	23
	% Total of population			50.8	49.2	12.0	11.9	6.1	5.3	13.8	14.1	12.6	12.2	5.4	4.9	.9	.8

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families migrated from various districts. This information is given in the table on the next page.

The following inferences can be derived from the above-stated table :—

1. The number of the displaced families from West Pakistan is 365 out of which 362 belong to West Punjab, 31 to Peshawar (NWFP) and two to Jacobabad (Sind). As a matter of fact these 33 families had gone from Punjab to Peshawar and Jacobabad about 30 years before the partition of India.

2. 25 families belong to the Punjabi-speaking area of the East Punjab.

3. 125 families originally belonged to Hariyana constituting the Hindi-speaking area of the East Punjab. Hence, in reality, out of the total of 528 Sansi families living at Delhi, 510 families originally belonged to Punjab.

4. Besides Punjab, 18 families belong to other provinces than Punjab : Rajasthan 9, Gujarat 2 and Uttar Pradesh 7.

3. Moities of Mahla-Beehdoo and Deras or Moonheens of Sansis of Delhi

The Sansis are mainly divided into two major groups—descendants of Mahla and Beehdoo who were the two sons of Sansi or Sansmal. Further each group has numerous small groups who trace their common ancestral relationship just eight or ten generations above and are called deras, moonheens, khaps, als or gotes. The khaps of Mahla can marry only in the khaps of Beehdoo and vice versa. These khaps or dehra are equivalent to the clans of a tribe. The Dera-wise distribution of these people is given below as found in different colonies. The true Sansis can only claim descent either from Mahla or from Beehdoo, but some accretions of some other unknown castes have also been able to mix in them who claim their descent from some concocted ancestors named Chhahri and Beebo, but they are definitely considered inferior by the descendants of Mahla and Beehdoo.

	MAHLA		BEEHDOO	
Name of Colony	*Name of dera*	*No. of Families*	*Name of dera*	*No. of Families*
1. Kasturbanagar	Halwan	2	Ghasi	7
	Subhania	9	Bhana	14
	Solongia	2	Popet	5

Name of Colony	Total No. of Families	Amritsar	Multan	Gurgaon	Montgomary	Ludhiana	Lyallpur	Sheikhupura	Sialkot	Rohtak	Lahore	Peshawar	Gujranwala	Karnal	Patiala	Moradabad	Hissar	Meerut	Bullandshehr	Jaipur	Ahmadabad	Jacobabad
Kasturba Nagar	120	—	96	—	10	—	7	—	—	—	3	—	1	—	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—
Majnoon Tilla	64	1	—	—	61	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Amritkaur Puri	74	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	49	—	—	1	—	—	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Rameshwari Nagar	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Prasad Nagar	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Prem Nagar	39	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	28	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	2	—
Moti Nagar	19	—	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tihar	3	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Andha Mughal	124	—	—	30	—	—	—	—	—	40	6	—	—	25	—	—	20	1	2	—	—	—
H. Block	23	—	8	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—
Naya Bazar	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Rajinder Nagar	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	528	1	124	30	72	2	8	1	107	40	18	31	2	25	22	2	25	3	2	9	2	2

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		MAHLA		BEEHDOO	
Name of Colony	*Name of dera*	*No. of Families*	*Name of dera*	*No. of Families*
Kasturba Nagar (*contd.*)	Tamaichi	1	Machhar	3
	Nandoo	7	Bagaria	2
	Naharia	14	Sadha	1
	Jhanwaria	2	Budhwan	1
	Khoobi	1	Netam	1
	Dhuria	6	Nagia	2
	Abhwa	9	Netla	8
	Chtran	2	Kadna	1
	Malkia	8	Ghamandi	3
	Khoobia	2	Karkhar	2
	Mahesh	1	Basaiya	1
	Kalji	1	—	—
	Total of Mahla families			67
	Total of Beehdoo families			51
	Total of Chhari families			2
			Total	120
2. Majnoon Tilla	Halwan	2	Pana	1
	Heeran	3	Budhwan	28
	Adwan	1	Jaswan	2
	Lulian	11	Kheemlian	2
	Balan	7	Gunwan	1
	Dheeran	5		
	Jodhian	1		
	Total	30		34
	Total No. of families..			64
3. Amrit Kaur Puri	Abhwa	26	Batoo	5
	Malkia	3	Basiya	26
	Chatran	2	Nagia	9
	Choosa	1	Raula	2
	Total	32		42
	Total No. of families ..			74
4. Rameshwari Nagar	Chatra	8	Teeda	4
	Abhwa	5	Peharwan	2

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Name of Colony	MAHLA *Name of dera*	*No. of Families*	BEEHDOO *Name of dera*	*No. of Families*
	Bairo	6	Bhoga	2
	Khoobi	1	Kalia	2
		Total 20		10
			Total No. of families ..	30
5. Prasad Nagar	Abhwa	16	Popat	5
	Malkia	6	Basaiya	2
			Batoo	1
		Total 22		8
			Total No. of families ..	30
6. Prem Nagar	Malkia	8	Netla	7
	Abhwa	8	Batoo	3
			Farjla	6
			Basaiya	3
		Total 16		19
			Total No. of families ..	35
7. Moti Nagar	Nahria	8	Bhana	5
	Dheeria	5		
	Jhanwaria	1		
		Total 14		5
			Total No. of families ...	19
8. Tihar	Dheeria	1	Sada	1
	Sabhania	1		
		Total 2		1
			Total No. of families ..	3
9. Andha Mughal	Mali	4	Panch	25
	Abhwa	7	Kalia	23
	Tamaichi	1	Aidlan	10
	Halwan	7	Popat	4

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Name of Colony	MAHLA Name of dera	No. of Families	BEEHDOO Name of dera	No. of Families
	Malkia	10	Netla	4
	Gwala	1		
	Total	30	Total	66
	Chhari families	= 19		
	Beebo ,,	= 9		
	Total No. of families ..	124		
10. H. Block Andha Mughal	Malkia	3	Bagaria	3
	Lala	4	Bedria	1
	Bambia	1	Pehrwan	1
	Khoobi	2	Aidlan	6
	Halwan	3		
	Total	13		11
	Total No. of families ..	24		
11. Naya Bazar	Nil		Chattoo	1
12. New Rajinder Nagar	Nil		Sidhu	1

The overall Dera-wise distribution of all the families of all the colonies is given below :

MAHLA Name of dera	No. of Families	BEEHDOO Name of dera	No. of Families
1. Halwan	14	1. Ghasi	7
2. Sabhania	10	2. Bhana	19
3. Salongia	2	3. Popat	14
4. Tamaichi	2	4. Machhar	3
5. Nandoo	7	5. Bagaria	5
6. Naharia	22	6. Bodhwan	29
7. Jhanwaria	3	7. Netan	1
8. Abhwa	71	8. Nagia	11
9. Dheeria	12	9. Netla	19
10. Chatran	4	10. Kadna	1
11. Malkia	38	11. Ghamandi	3
12. Adwan	1	12. Karkhal	2
13. Balan	7	13. Basaiya	32
14. Lulian	11	I4. Pana	1

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MAHLA			BEEHDOO			
	Name of dera	*No. of Families*		*Name of dera*	*No. of Families*	
15.	Heeran	3	15.	Jaswan	2	
16.	Dheeran	5	16.	Kheemalan	2	
17.	Jodhian	1	17.	Gonwan	1	
18.	Choosa	1	18.	Batoo	9	
19.	Chatra	8	19.	Raula	2	
20.	Bairo	6	20.	Teeda	4	
21.	Gawala	1	21.	Pahrwan	3	
22.	Lala	4	22.	Bhoga	2	
23.	Bambia	1	23.	Kalia	25	
24.	Khoobia	2	24.	Farjala	6	
25.	Mahesh	1	25.	Sadha	3	
26.	Kalji	1	26.	Panch	25	
27.	Mali	4	27.	Aidlan	15	
28.	Khoobi	3	28.	Pedaria	1	Total of all the deras of Mahla and Beehdoo = 58
			29.	Chatto	1	
			30.	Sidhu	1	
	Total	245			249	

Total of Chhari families = 25
„ „ Beebo „ = 9

4. Family-wise Occupation

It was found during the enquiries that usually one member of a family is the earning member whereas the other members are dependents on him. There may be hardly any family in which diversified occupations are found, if it has more than one earning member. I have been able to find 26 different occupations followed by the Sansis of Delhi. The regular services include the persons who work in Government or private offices, in mills and factories. So the clerks, teachers and other persons who get regular fixed monthly emoluments are included in the occupation of regular services. The casual labourers are those who do sundry jobs but are not employed anywhere regularly. There are some families who have been allotted agricultural lands in the Punjab, and live on the rent or produce of land. The colony-wise distribution of the occupations of the Sansis is tabulated in the next table :—

A careful perusal of the table shows that the Sansis are adopting all sorts of possible occupations in order to earn an

Occupation	Kasturba Nagar	Majnoon Tilla	Amrit Kaur Puri	Rameshwari Nagar	Prasad Nagar	Prem Nagar	Moti Nagar	Tihar	Andha Mughal	H. Block Andha Mughal	Naya Bazar	New Rajinder Nagar
1. Regular Service	50	25	6	—	—	—	12	2	60	8	1	1
2. Shop-keepers	4	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Casual Labourers	14	22	56	24	29	38	2	—	25	11	—	—
4. Priests	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Tailors	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—
6. Tennis-markers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	—
7. Music-Masters	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
8. Cottage Industry	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
9. Motor Drivers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—
10. Film Advertisements	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. Tonga Drivers on hire	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—
12. Contractors	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13. Tap Installers	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14. Watchmen	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—

(Continued on next page)

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Occupation	Kasturba Nagar	Majnoon Tilla	Amrit Kaur Puri	Rameshwari Nagar	Prasad Nagar	Prem Nagar	Moti Nagar	Tihar	Andha Mughal I	H. Block Andha Mughal	Naya Bazar	New Rajinder Nagar
15. Driving one's own Tongas	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	5	1	—	—
16. Scooter Drivers on hire	4	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
17. Driving own scooters	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
18. Pushing hand-carts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
19. Carpenters	—	—	4	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20. Domestic Servants	—	—	5	2	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
21. Riksha-pullers	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
22. Vegetable Vendors	9	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
23. Depending on Lands	14	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
24. Teachers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
25. Woodcutters	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
26. Massagers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—
Total	120	64	74	30	30	39	19	3	124	23	1	1

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honest livelihood and the time is not far off when they will have a worthy economic status though at present they hardly make two ends meet.

5. Income

The annual income of every family was noted during investigation and in this way the total annual income of various colonies was separately calculated on the basis of the number of families found in every colony. The income of all the earning members of a family was duly included in calculation. The annual totals of the incomes of various colonies are given in the following table on whose basis the per capita income of the Sansis of Delhi has been worked out.

Sl. No.	*Name of Colony*	*Total No. of Families*	*Total Annual Income of the Colony*	*Total No. of Members*
1	Kasturba Nagar	120	145000	728
2	Majnoon Tilla	64	62894	324
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	74	64800	355
4	Rameshwari Nagar	30	32040	216
5	Prasad Nagar	30	22680	138
6	Prem Nagar	39	27080	183
7	Moti Nagar	19	16527	130
8	Tihar	3	7200	22
9	Andha Mughal	124	168000	670
10	H. Block Andha Mughal	23	25404	124
11	Naya Bazar	1	1380	7
12	New Rajinder Nagar	1	8400	4
	Grand Total	528	581,405	2,901

Annual per capita income = 581,405/2,901 = Rs. 200.42

Monthly per capita income = 200.42/12 = Rs. 16.7

The annual per capita income of India as a whole, calculated by the Government in 1961 on the then current prices is Rs. 330.00 which is far above the annual per capita income of the Sansis of Delhi, which invites the special attention of the Government and the planners to their indigence which hovers not only over the heads of these people but also over the millions of Indians like them.

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6. Modern Amenities

It is a fact that on the whole the Sansis are a poor community yet some of them do lead a life of the standard of the middle classes of India. Hence I thought it of interest to collect the following data regarding some of the modern amenities of life, as given below :

Sl. No.	*Name of Colony*	*Watches*	*Cycles*	*Radio sets*	*Time-pieces*	*Electric Fans*	*Harmonium*
1	Kasturba Nagar	40	30	8	12	—	—
2	Majnoon Tilla	21	26	3	6	—	2
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	46	8	7	1	—	—
4	Rameshwari Nagar	18	12	2	—	—	1
5	Prasad Nagar	19	4	—	—	—	—
6	Prem Nagar	4	2	—	—	—	—
7	Moti Nagar	5	6	2	—	—	—
8	Tihar	3	3	—	—	—	—
9	Andha Mughal	13	15	6	4	5	—
10	H. Block	10	9	4	—	—	—
11	Naya Bazar	1	1	1	1	1	—
12	New Rajinder Nagar	1	1	1	1	—	—
	Total No. of families possessing these articles	181	117	34	25	6	3

7. Widowers and Widows

Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*Widowers*	*Widows*
1	Kasturba Nagar	13	20
2	Majnoon Tilla	6	9
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	2	10
4	Rameshwari Nagar	—	7
5	Prasad Nagar	—	3
6	Prem Nagar	1	5
7	Moti Nagar	1	—
8	Tihar	1	—
9	Andha Mughal	7	24
10	H. Block Andha Mughal	1	2
11	Naya Bazar	1	—
12	New Rajinder Nagar	—	—
	Total	33	80

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Although it is not prohibited to remarry a widow yet the figures show that there is a great disparity between the number of the widowers and the widows. This is mostly due to caste restrictions on the females to marry outside the family of their previous in-laws and according to the Sansi Panchayat Rules the close relatives and the caste fellows of the dead husband of a widow for ever remain the masters of the widow and she cannot marry anybody without their consent and if somebody else but the member of the family itself who is entitled to marry her is not available then anybody else who marries her has to pay the bride price which they call *banni*. But in case of men there is no restriction like this and the widowers are comparatively remarried more than the widows.

8. Religion

The Sansis in India are either Hindu or Sikh. The family-wise and colony-wise figures of the religions of the Sansis are given below :

Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*Total No. of Families*	*Hindu*	*Sikh*
1	Kasturba Nagar	120	53	67
2	Majnoon Tilla	64	63	1
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	74	23	61
4	Rameshwari Nagar	30	30	—
5	Prasad Nagar	30	—	30
6	Prem Nagar	39	11	28
7	Moti Nagar	19	2	17
8	Tihar	3	1	2
9	Andha Mughal	124	124	—
10	H. Block Andha Mughal	23	23	—
11	Naya Bazar	1	1	—
12	New Rajinder Nagar	1	—	1
	Total	528	331	207

9. Mother-tongue

Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*Total No. of Families*	*Hindi*	*Punjabi*	*Gujarati*
1	Kasturba Nagar	120	3	117	—
2	Majnoon Tilla	64	—	64	—

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Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*Total No. of Families*	*Hindi*	*Punjabi*	*Gujarati*
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	74	—	74	—
4	Rameshwari Nagar	30	—	30	—
5	Prasad Nagar	30	—	30	—
6	Prem Nagar	39	11	26	2
7	Moti Nagar	19	1	18	—
8	Tihar	3	—	3	—
9	Andha Mughul	124	118	6	—
10	H. Block	23	—	23	—
11	Naya Bazar	1	—	1	—
12	New Rajinder Nagar	1	—	1	—
	Total	528	133	393	2

10. LITERACY

Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*No. of Male Literates*	*No. of Female Literates*
1	Kasturba Nagar	147	70
2	Majnoon Tilla	47	28
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	41	14
4	Rameshwari Nagar	28	—
5	Prasad Nagar	15	1
6	Prem Nagar	22	1
7	Moti Nagar	39	19
8	Tihar	9	—
9	Andha Mughul	127	6
10	H. Block	26	2
11	Naya Bazar	2	2
12	New Rajinder Nagar	1	1
	Total	504	144

Total percentage of literacy on the basis of the total population of 2,901 persons = 22.3 %

percentage of male literacy = 17.3

percentage of female literacy = 5.0

The present all-India overall literacy percentage is 23.7. The overall percentage of Delhi is 51.0 whereas that of the Punjab is 23.7.

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The female literacy of the Sansi is very low. It may be mentioned that there is not even a single Sansi female who is even Matriculate. However there are five male Matriculates in Kasturba Nagar, one in Majnoon Tilla, one in Rameshwari Nagar, two in Moti Nagar, five in Andha Mughul and one in Naya Bazar. Besides Matriculates, there are two F. A.S also in Andha Mughul. But it is expected that after a decade or so their literacy and the standard of academic qualifications will surely increase because there are many families who are educating their children. In the end it may be stated that a member of this community is M.A. as well as M.SC. and has done PH.D. However in the Punjab there are a dozen graduates and scores of matriculates.

11. MONOGAMY AND POLYGAMY

In the matter of the number of living wives that a husband can have and the number of living husbands which a wife can have, the Sansi society is monogamous. However polyandry is absolutely unheard of in this society, though due to certain circumstances a man may have more than one wife, but this is done usually for the sake of children if the first wife is sterile or her children do not survive at all. One can also have the second wife as a levirate marriage or sororate marriage if his wife's sister's husband or his brother dies, and the widow is left without any support. Regarding this matter it was found that six men of one locality have married for the sake of children because the children of their previous wives could not survive. In this colony two persons have also levirate and two persons have sororate marriages. In another locality a man has married second wife because his previous wife is sterile. In this colony there are also five persons having levirate marriages, and one having a sororate marriage. In Amrit Kaur Puri there are four levirate marriages. At Prem Nagar there is also a case of levirate marriage. In Andha Mughul there are three cases of sororate marriages. In the end it is to be noted that under normal circumstances a Sansi man should have only one wife, but for the women the question of polyandry is out of question.

12. MORTALITY

The data about the mortality rate of the Sansis of Delhi

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could not be collected according to the required accuracy. However I could get the information from each family about the infant mortality (No. of infants died) in 15 years from January 1947 to December 1961. They supplied the information just from their memory.

Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*Males*	*Females*
1	Kasturba Nagar	83	70
2	Majnoon Tilla	49	39
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	71	65
4	Rameshwari Nagar	18	27
5	Prasad Nagar	51	35
6	Prem Nagar	24	19
7	Moti Nagar	22	23
8	Tihar	4	6
9	Andha Mughul	89	137
10	H. Block	14	17
11	Naya Bazar	—	—
12	New Rajinder Nagar	—	—
	Total	425	438

On the basis of the total male and female infant deaths in 15 years, if we divide them by 15 then 28 male infants might have died in a year and 29 females. Although we cannot make out much scientific accuracy from these rough figures yet we can say that like their almost similar equal sex ratio of births their deaths also follow the same trend.

13. BIRTH-RATE IN 1961

In this repect I tried to collect the data accurately and the No. of males and females born from January 1961 to December 1961 has been given below, colony-wise :

Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*Males*	*Females*
1	Kasturba Nagar	15	9
2	Majnoon Tilla	6	5
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	12	15
4	Rameshwari Nagar	6	7
5	Prasad Nagar	5	4
6	Prem Nagar	7	7

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Sl. No.	*Name of the Colony*	*Males*	*Females*
7	Moti Nagar	4	4
8	Tihar	1	—
9	Andha Mughal	15	15
10	H. Block	5	3
11	Naya Bazar	1	—
12	New Rajinder Nagar	—	1
	Total	77	70

The total births in a year are 77+70 = 147
Total population of Sansis of Delhi 2,901
Overall birth-rate for 1961 50.70 per 1000 population

Male birth-rate per 1000 population 26.5
Female birth-rate per 1000 population 24.2

14. Sterility of Women

Out of the total of 528 Sansi families studied, five sterile women were brought to notice.

15. Infirmities

Out of the total population of 2,901 the following types of infirmities were noticed. In the other colonies no infirmities were noticed.

	Name of the Colony	*No. of Crippled Persons*		*No. of Blind Persons*	
		Males	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*
1	Kasturba Nagar	1	—	1	1
2	Majnoon Tilla	1	1	2	1
3	Rameshwari Nagar	—	—	1	1
4	Andha Mughul	—	—	—	1
	Total	2	1	4	4

16. Twins and Supertwins

During the investigation no case of the birth of supertwins was informed. However the following data of twin-births in

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different colonies were obtained:

	Name of the Colony	*Total Twin-births*
1	Kasturba Nagar	1 (both males)
2	Majnoon Tilla	1 (both females)
3	Amrit Kaur Puri	2 (one twin of males and the other twin of females)
4	Rameshwari Nagar	2 (one twin of males and one twin of females)
5	Andha Mughul	1 (both females)
	Total	7

In other colonies no case of twin-births was informed.

17. Chharas

The males who are unable to marry throughout their lives due to some reasons or remain celibate on their own choice are called *chharas* in Punjabi. In all five *chharas* were found in the total population of 2,901 (two in Kasturba Nagar, one in Prem Nagar and two in Andha Mughul).

18. Adoption

Like other communities adoption is also allowed in the Sansi society. However the fact remains that the persons who are adopted by, but do not belong to Sansi community do suffer from certain estrangement and a social handicap because they are not acknowledged as true Sansis. Sometimes they are unable to be married within the fold of Sansi society. At any rate the instinct of having children is utterly irresistible in the life of man and the ambition of leaving behind a son after one's death is especially paramount in the Indian society and religion. So the people who do not have any issue at all adopt other children or if one has only the daughters, he may adopt a boy as a son. Hence during the investigation I have come across two cases of adoption among the Sansis of Delhi.

19. Marriages with Non-Sansis

In the past the Sansi Panchayat had almost an absolute social control over the Sansis and they could not even dream of giving

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their girls in marriage to non-Sansis, but now although not common yet some cases of the marriages of the Sansis with non-Sansis and vice versa are found. Two factors have played their cogent roles in accomplishing it. Firstly the weakening of the hold of their Panchayat over them and secondly their acculturation and consequent effect of integration with the rest of the Indian society. At Delhi four Sansi men have married the girls of other communities. In all there are 12 Sansi families who have given their daughters in marriage to the non-Sansis. Ten Sikh Sansi families have married their daughters in the Sikh Jat families of the Punjab. One Sansi family has given its daughter to a Hindu Rajput and two families have given their daughters in marriage to Brahmans. This shows that gradually the social distance of the Sansis from the rest of the society is decreasing.

20. Fertility of Sansi Women

The average number of children born to a Sansi woman is eight. The births of 10 or 12 children to a woman is commonly met with. It will be interesting to note that during investigation I came to know of a woman who gave birth to 19 children and similarly one was noticed to have given birth to 18 and another woman to have given birth to 17 children, though the number of the survivals did not exceed half the number of the births in any case.

21. Use of Contraceptives

Out of 528 families studied only 15 families know well some of the contraceptives and their use. Yet the Sansi society has not properly understood the importance of family planning and attempt to have fewer number of children and spacing their births on their own choice.

22. Ailments of Infants

It was told that most of the infant deaths took place due to the attack of small pox, but this mostly happened before 1947. After that the greater part of the infant mortality was ascribed to fevers and dysentry. However at present the infant mortality seems to be decreasing because they have begun to pay more attention to sanitation, personal and domestic, and invariably

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get the modern treatment for the ailing children.

23. Age at Marriage

Although some middle-aged and old persons told that they were married before they reached the age of 8 or 9 years, yet the average age at marriage for the males comes to 17 years and that of the females comes to 14 years. This calculation is based on the 528 families which have been studied. Although at present the social evil of their early age marriages is decreasing, yet they need a great deal of enlightenment regarding this matter because during my enquiries I hardly met a young boy who was unmarried but was still studying for his Matriculation examination. Consequently their untimely and early marriage has created a great hurdle in the way of their careers.

24. Housing Condition of Sansis

The housing condition of the Sansis settled at Delhi is very bad on the whole. In the colonies of Kasturba Nagar and Andha Mughul they live in brickmade small quarters but half the number of quarters have more than one family in each. The housing condition of these people living in the colonies of Rameshwari Nagar, Prasad Nagar, Prem Nagar and Majnoon Tilla is the worst because they live in small *jhugis*. As a matter of fact some of the *jhugis* are found in all of their colonies excepting New Rajinder Nagar and Naya Bazar. There is a great contrast among the housing conditions of the members of this community, because in spite of the fact that very great majority of them do not have comfortable and decent housing condition, yet some of them are living in very good houses, having all the necessary modern amenities and there are two families of Andha Mughul who have even their extra buildings than their residential houses, which they have rented out on handsome monthly rents.

This study is just an individual effort, limited in time, energy and other resources. Anyhow this spade-work of the study of the demography of the Sansis who are the most prominent De-notified ethnic group of India could be of great use if some other scholars make a comparative study of some of their other allied people of Nothern India.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

"Poverty possesses this disease, that through want it teaches man to do evil."
—EURIPIDES.

As we find everywhere else the family is the economic unit of the Sansi society. By an economic unit, we mean a group of certain individuals who satisfy their economic wants from a common pool of income, irrespective of age, sex or earning capacity. Five hundred Sansi families were studied and it was found that the average number of the members of a family is six. On an average, in a family, one or two members are independent earners and others are working or non-working dependents. Like their population figures the occupational statistics of the Sansis also seem to be erroneously recorded in the census reports. One is pained to read that in the census reports of the Punjab from 1881 to 1931, there are certain tribes or castes whose traditional occupation is recorded as *Crime*. This was an intolerable socio-economic injustice to most of the members of the communities which at that time were designated as De-notified Tribes. As a rule, the enumeration in the census report should be made as the people answer the questionnaire but in case of the Sansis and some other De-notified tribes it appears that the enumerators made some entries not on the basis of actual answers received but according to the pre-determined instructions given to them by the English rulers. Can anybody imagine that if a person in a census is questioned about his or her traditional occupation, he or she will give the answer, *Crime*? But it is sad to say that the traditional occupation of the Sansis is recorded as Crime. One may well imagine the psychological impact on these people designated in this way, and on their children who knew from their very childhood that according to the verdict of the State, their traditional occupation was crime. They could also well think of what society thought of them. Hence frustration of this type was a very cogent cause of their demoralisation.

In the Census Report of 1931, 8,517 Sansis of both the sexes

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were dealt with to determine their occupation. No further data in later censuses are available. Hence their occupational following as classified into thirteen categories and recorded in the Census Report of 1931 is given below :—

Occupation	*Number of persons following it*	*Percentage of the persons to the total population dealt with*
1. Exploitation of animals and plants	3,777	44.32%
2. Exploitation of minerals	41	0.47%
3. Industries	240	2.81%
4. Transport	240	2.81%
5. Trade	351	4.22%
6. Public Services	1	0.01%
7. Public Administration	27	0.31%
8. Arts & Crafts	273	3.20%
9. Persons living on other incomes.	1	0.01%
10. Domestic servants	1	0.01%
11. Contractors, Clerks, Cashiers, etc., otherwise unspecified.	1	0.01%
12. Labourers unspecified	394	4.61%
13. Beggars, Criminals and Inmates of Jails and Asylums.	3,170	37.21%
Total	8,517	100.00

Although the author has not been able to collect the complete present population figures of the Sansis, the work being beyond his resources and capacity, yet during his several years' tour of Punjab from village to village, he recorded more than 1000 families of the Sansis who are cultivators. He has also seen 200 domestic servants of both sexes. In case of the Government or Public Services the Sansis have made surprising progress in comparison with their condition in 1931 when only one Sansi was recorded as a public servant. At present there are hundreds of Sansis who are employed in Public Service. Their educational progress is one of the most important causes of the improvement in their economic

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life as everywhere the educational standard and the economic standard of a community go side by side. As recorded in the Census Report of 1931 there were 6, 64 and 219 literate Sansis in the censuses of 1891, 1911 and 1931 respectively. But according to my present enquiries, the literacy of Sansis constitutes 22.3% of their present population in the Punjab.

Forty or Fifty years ago the trend of the Sansis was different and regressive. Certain families of the Sansis were given lands in the settlement of criminal tribes in the Multan district. I visited one of them in 1944. Those families were well-settled on land, like the middle-class agricultural people of the higher classes. But this does not give credit to the idlers of this community, as some Sansis who were given land in those settlements gave it up to escape hard work and assiduous labour. So in the past some of these people were not happy to settle on land, but today all the Sansis of Punjab are demanding agricultural lands from the Government, and the scheme of the State is also in operation but in a very inadequate and slow manner.

Their Present Nature of Work and Remuneration

The unskilled labourers and skilled workers are paid according to the wage-rate prevalent in the Punjab. The skilled labourers earn Rs. 3 to 4 a day in the factories and mills. There are some Sansi bricklayers also. I met four Sansi bricklayers (*raaj*) belonging to the village of Wheela, district Gurdaspur, working in the city of Lyallpur (West Punjab) in 1944. The bricklayers get Rs. 3 per day in the villages and Rs. 4 in the urban areas. The agricultural labourers do weeding, hoeing, ploughing, watering of fields, stripping of sugar-cane and other sundry jobs on the farms for which they get Re. 1 and As. 8 per day with meals and Rs. 2 per day without meals. But these are not regular jobs all through the year. A few of them work for the Jats of the villages on a yearly basis, getting on the average 20 maunds of grain per year with meals. In this type of work a Sansi is strongly opposed and condemned by the panchs of Sansi Panchayat as they think it to be a low type of work fit for the Chuhras and Mazahbis. Accordingly, in the Punjab there are hardly a few cases of this yearly service.

The tribal Panchayat of the Sansis does not allow its caste members to profess the work of depressed classes like Chuhras, Mazahbis, Bhangis and Chamars. This is why we do not find

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any Sansi working as a sweeper (*bhangi*), a cobbler or a shoemaker. There are cases also when Sansis were ex-communicated for dealing in shoes. Now there is a large number of Sansi watchmen in the Punjab. A village Chaukidar or watchman gets Rs. 240 as salary per annum from the Government. Formerly this occupation was more or less a monopoly of the Barwalas, a Muslim sub-caste of Jolahas who migrated to West Punjab in 1947 due to the partition of the Province. Besides this salary, sometimes, at the time of supper he collects *chapatis* for his family from his village households. Among other employees a Police Constable gets about Rs. 1,000 a year as a soldier also does. A clerk gets from Rs. 1440 to Rs. 1800 per annum. A school teacher or Patwari gets about Rs. 1,000 a year. Similarly a person working as a postman or a sorter gets nearly the same emoluments. There are only four or five well-paid Sansi government employees in the Punjab. There is a non-gazetted Police Inspector getting about Rs. 4,000 a year and another Sansi gazetted officer is getting Rs. 8,400 a year. Although all the types of regular employees only form a very small percentage of their total population, yet they have made a great progress in this respect and I have come to across about 60 clerks, 80 Patwaris and more than 100 school teachers belonging to the Sansi Community employed in the Punjab and Delhi. I have also seen some Sansi women working as school teachers and nurses or *dais*.

The land-owning cultivators are not well-to-do people. Firstly, they do not possess economic holdings and secondly, their insufficient holdings are not fertile. A very poor type of land is given to them. This can be seen if one goes to the villages of Kasabad, near Ludhiana, and to Ghanna, near Phillaur. Here some Sansis are settled. There is hardly a family which earns Rs. 1,000 or more a year from its agricultural land. There are some tenant-and land-owning cultivators who are getting very high yield from the fertile lands which they cultivate. They use all the agricultural tools and implements which are in vogue among the general peasants of the Punjab.

The traders of the animals also earn good amounts at times, but their incomes just enable them to pull on. They are petty-traders who cannot buy sheep and goats in big lots. So a trader purchases hardly 20 animals at a time and drives them to some city where he sells them for a small profit.

The Sansi herdsmen generally keep sheep, goats and pigs. On the average a family gets Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 a year from the

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sale of animals for the consumption of meat and from the wool of sheep, shearing a crop every six months.

Lastly, we come to the most important and complicated source of income. Some Sansi population of the Punjab still depends on hereditary callings of serving the village Jats. The *virt* system of Sansis, Brahmans and Mirasis is the same. The Sikh Jats of Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar and the Sikh States call their Sansis, Brahmans and Mirasis *daadas*. This term literally means 'grandfather'. Perhaps they are addressed like this because of their being genealogists of the Jats, and genealogists remember the names of the *daadas* or grandfathers.

The Muslim Mirasis were also the genealogists of the Jats of the Punjab, but after the partition of the Province, they migrated to West Pakistan. Since a very long time the Sansi has been the most acknowledged and respected genealogist of the Jats of the Punjab and far excels the Mirasi or Brahman, in his genealogical authenticity. Sir Athelstane Baines writes in his Ethnography, "when a question arises in connection with pedigree, it is said that the word of the Sansi is accepted in preference to that of the Mirasi".[1]

Besides receiving *laag*, like other Laagis of the village, the Sansis receive meals for the whole family during some auspicious functions. They also get delicate edibles from the houses of the Jats like the Brahman, the Granthi (Sikh Priest), and some other Laagis on the occasion of important festivals. Now this system is decreasing day by day, but in some villages the Sansi women collect a handful of flour or grain every day from every household. In this way the Sansis have a constant source of subsistence.

Now we come to their emoluments in kind. At every harvest a Sansi family receives a *bhari* (a bundle of wheat corn) from every house of Jats. It may be remembered that a Jat family is allotted to a certain Sansi family. After this, like other Laagis, a Sansi gets his share of *riri* or *phakka* from the last threshing floor (*pir*) of Jats. Generally he gets eight seers of grain. Sometimes from some well-to-do and liberal Jats, he receives *riri* up to 20 to 30 seers of grain. Sometimes, he is given grain instead of *bhari* also, in addition to his proper share, *riri*.

Then comes the half-yearly *kalaan* of the Sansis. A Sansi goes to his Jat *jajmans*, after every six months and recites their genealogy (*shajra-s-nasab* or *peehri*). Every family gives him two or three seers of grain, and, at times, some rich and generous

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families, at the recitation of their genealogy, give him clothes and even money. The Sansis also go to the villages of the in-laws of the married girls of the Jats. They call the married girls of the village *dhianis*. They also recite the genealogy of the father of the girl, in the house of her in-laws for which they get donations of clothes and money which they call *thahar* (a place of support or stay). Now the importance of Laagis is decreasing because of the rise of education and the facilities of communications which have replaced the village messengers. So the Sansi and other Laagis have to eke out some new means of livelihood and this they are doing. The above class of Sansis is seldom rich and it is only the educated and well-placed members of them who are economically well off. Generally the Sansis just manage to exist having simply a *guzara* or subsistence. The income of the most of the families does not exceed Rs. 400 a year. It may also be mentioned that the Sansi women and young girls add to the family income by picking cotton in its season or gleaning ears of wheat (*sila*) at the time of harvest.

Debt and Sansis

The Sansis are generally poor people, and poverty and debt go hand in hand. But it is a notable fact that the Sansis are not in debt in proportion to their poverty. The persons who are in debt owe small amounts of money. The reason is clear. It is a universal law of economics that the major expenditure of the poor people is always incurred on food. The food problem of this community, and especially that of hereditary genealogists and village functionaries, is solved to a great extent like those of the Granthi, the Mullah and the Brahman priest to whom the villagers give grain, flour and bread.

They spend on clothes just like the other poor people of the Punjab. The third primary necessity of life is housing. Excepting in towns and cities, there is not even a single family of Sansis which pays rent for its lodging in the villages as they have their own *Kothas* or houses situated in the common land of the village or on a plot of some Jat. But this does not rule out the possibility of the Sansis being indebted. Approximately 10 to 15% of the total Sansi population is indebted, and I have not been able to find even a single family indebted for more than Rs. 2,000. There are very exceptional cases in which a single family owes a debt of more than Rs. 500 ; two-thirds of the 15% of indebted

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population of these people owe less than Rs. 100—and one-third above, but not a single family more than Rs. 2,000. Some of their money-lenders tell that the Sansis are very honest and dependable debtors who clear their debts conscientiously. The purposes for which they take loans are given below :—

1. *Marriage* : Marriage is the great cause of their indebtedness. They are very lavish on such occasions. In the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar the custom of distributing *seer* and *balhni* is very wasteful and expensive. Country liquor and meat are used in large quantities at the time of marriages. It is true that the Sansis get on tolerably in their everyday economic life but there are scarcely any families which have hoarded money.

2. *Jhagra* : The second cause of their indebtedness is *Jhagra*, of a communal or caste dispute which is to be decided by the Sansi Panchayat, which is the greatest cause of their backwardness. The ways in which wealth is squandered away in *jhagras* or dispute will be explained in detail in the chapter on their social organization.

3. *Banni* : The third cause is *banni* or bride-price. From the term bride-price, it should not be understood that the Sansi society encourages bride-price. On the contrary, the Sansi society strongly hates the acceptance of bride-price and a person who takes a price for a female given in marriage, is looked down upon as a mean and abject creature. Here we mean that, in a rivalry or disharmony due to some circumstances, if the parents or the guardians of a married girl want to break her relations with her husband or divorce her, they cannot do so without paying all the expenses of her in-laws which they incurred at the marriage, whether they paid bride-price or not. The Sansi society is very rigid in its commitments. Even a verbal commitment of a betrothal binds the parents or guardians of the girl to give her hand to the proposed spouse. If they go back on the promise they have to pay a heavy fine to the prospective son-in-law and the tribal panchayat plays a great role in this matter. Another characteristic of the Sansis is that they are a very obstinate and stubborn people. They are generally very strict in morals, but if any girl is seduced or elopes, then they are not easily prone to return her to her parents and in a majority of cases they never do it. Lastly their Panchayat sits and the defaulter pays a heavy amount as a *banni*. So in the case of a *banni* they get indebted because usually they live from hand to mouth and they borrow money for these purposes.

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4. *Kath* : *Kath* is an expensive ceremony celebrated by all the castes of the Punjab, after the death of an old person who leaves behind a large number of descendants. On a *Kath*, the Sansis invariably run into debt.

5. *Trade and Other Productive Purposes* : It is very encouraging that now some of the wise and progressive Sansis are getting loans from the Government or from individuals, for the following productive purposes :—

(a) For the purpose of purchasing land for cultivation.
(b) For the purpose of purchasing bullocks and implements for cultivation.
(c) For carrying on the trade of sheep and goats or for breeding them.
(d) For industrial undertakings as some of them apply for *taccavi* loans for installing flour mills and all-pressing machines. etc.
(e) A few of them are also noticed to get loans for giving higher education to their children.

In the light of the above facts we can say that the Sansi economy is undergoing a change for the better, day by day.

Belongings of Sansis

The property of the Sansis can be mainly divided into following two classes : -

1. Immovable Property

(a) *Land* : A very small percentage of the Sansis possesses land and even those who possess it have very small and uneconomic holdings. I studied 50 families of the village of Ghana near Phillaur, district Jullundur, and it was noted that the land-holding of a family varies from two to four acres and the land in 60% of the cases is poor. There are a few families which possess about 10 acres each or more but no family has more than 15 acres.

(b) *House* : Fifty or sixty years ago some of them had thatched huts but now it is very uncommon to see their thatched houses (*chhans* or *chhapris*). At present a Sansi family usually owns a *kacha* plastered house constructed in the design of the *kacha* houses of the general population of the Punjab. Such a house does not cost more than Rs. 300 or Rs. 400. Now some of the well-to-do families have also made their *pacca* houses. The

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pacca houses are increasing with the improvement in the economic conditions of the Sansis and the Welfare Department of the Punjab Government is also giving grants to these people according to the plan of the Government, for the construction of model houses. There are very few Sansi families who have their own drinking wells, though the hand-pumps are seen in the compounds of hundreds of the Sansi households. The land on which the houses of Sansis are situated usually belongs to the common land of the village (*shamm-laat-deh*) or it is a property of some individual landlord, for which they pay no rent.

2. Movable Property

Cattle : As already stated, almost every Sansi family possesses some animals. A family of a cultivator has a pair of bullocks also.

3. House Effects

(a) *Furniture* : Generally, they have an ordinary cot per member. Some families possess *palangs* (costly big cots) and some of the educated and well-to-do families have all types of modern furniture.

(b) *Clothes* : It is also seen that some Sansi families have ready-made spare suits of clothes in the Punjabi fashion. Generally they possess only whatever clothes they have on their person. When these are worn out, they purchase new ones as and when they can afford to do it. The fair sex has more clothes and costlier ones than of men. Pillows are used mostly by the educated families. The low-paid educated persons have two or three chairs and a table in their houses. A well-to-do family was seen having five folding *niwari palangs*, twelve chairs, two tables and a man-sized looking-glass and some other modern articles of furniture.

(c) *Utensils* : In the past they commonly used aluminium utensils but now all the Sansis use utensils of copper, bronze and brass. Only one Sansi family was seen to possess some utensils of stainless steel and silver. No family is seen which uses utensils and other kitchen appliances of European style. The number of vessels varies according to the members of the family or according to its economic condition. The educated families also use the China cups and plates. A big *pateela* (kettle), a platter (*praat*), one or two iron buckets, a small pan (*karahi*) and a baking iron-sheet (*tawa*) are indispensable in every house. Like other Punjabis they use a wooden-mortar (*chattoo*) instead of stone-mortar (*koondi*)

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for pounding salt, chillies, spices and other eatable articles. The pounder is generally a thick club, two to three feet in length (*matehar* or *ghotna danda*) which costs nothing though the *chattoo* costs from one and a half rupee to two.

(d) *Ornaments* : Some decades ago the Sansis mostly used to wear silver ornaments but now keeping pace with the Punjabi society, they are using all types of ornaments. Gold ornaments are in common vogue among them but few of them can afford to possess them. The quantity of gold in possession of these people cannot be easily estimated as they are very secretive, and labouring under the past fear of the Criminal Tribes Act, they do not reveal their precious possessions to others.

(e) *Recreational Articles* : I have seen 50 Radio sets possessed by different families of this community. Some of them have harmoniums, *kings* (single-stringed *desi* sitar), flutes, *dholaks* and cymbals, etc. Some of them join Hindu Bhajan Mandalis and the Sikh Diwans in Gurdwaras and thus they sing *bhajans* (hymns) or *shabads* with great devotion. A few of their educated persons have a great liking for reading and they have books in large number. A member of this community possesses a library worth Rs. 70,000.

It will be interesting to assess the monetary value of their total belongings. In order to do it I studied three families of different economic standards which I think, as a whole, fairly represent the economic condition of this community. The belongings of the three families studied are given below :—

I. Belongings of a Poor Family

		Rs.
A *kacha* house	...	200
One brass platter	...	6
Four brass glasses	...	6
One brass sieve	...	1
One kettle of brass	...	5
One bucket	...	2
One pestle and one mortar	...	2
Eight earthen pots including pitchers and cooking pot (*haandi*)	...	2
Old and new wearing clothes of the family	...	50
Four quilts, three old and one new	...	35
Four sheets of clothes, two old and two new	...	22
Four old cots (*manjis*)	...	60
Two goats with young ones	...	40

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		Rs.
One she-ass (*khoti*)	...	30
A pair of silver bangles (*gokhroos*)	...	15
Grinding hand mill, broom, bottles, axe, spade, sticks, winnowing basket and ropes, etc.	...	15
Grain stock including wheat, gram and rice	...	40
Total	...	531

Members of the family 6
(The houseowner aged 40, his wife aged 35, three sons of 12, 10 and 7 respectively and one daughter 4 years old).

II. Belongings of a Middle-class Family

		Rs.
Kacha house of two rooms	...	500
Eight brass glasses	...	12
Six brass and two bronze plates (*thalis*)	...	22
One big brass platter	...	7
Two buckets	...	4
Kitchen equipment	...	5
Two kettles (*pateelas*)	...	10
One *degchi*	...	12
Pots	...	5
Two China plates and three cups	...	3.50
Two small tea-spoons	...	0.50
One iron pan (*karahi*)	...	4
One hand-grinding mill (*chakki*)	...	6
Clothes new and old	...	100
Five quilts, three old and two new	...	34
Five sheets (*chader*)	...	20
One old warm coat	...	16
One old blanket	...	10
Two bed carpets	...	8
Two pillows	...	3
Five old coats	...	40
One *palang*	...	25
One old chair	...	5
One buffalo with her young one	...	300

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		Rs.
One she-ass (*khoti*)	...	30
Two golden rings (*mundris*)	...	70
One pair of golden *valis* (an ornament which hangs from the ear-lobe in wearing)	...	108
Sundry articles	...	20
Grain and other eatables in stock	...	70
Total	...	1,450

Members of the family 7
(The head of family, aged 40, his wife aged 38, three sons of 15, 10 and 12 years respectively, two daughters of 7 and 4 years respectively).

III. BELONGINGS OF A WELL-TO-DO AND EDUCATED JOINT FAMILY WHICH HAS MIGRATED FROM THE WEST PUNJAB AS DISPLACED PERSONS

		Rs.
One *kacha* house of five rooms	...	2,500
30 brass glasses	...	45
15 brass plates	...	30
15 bronze plates	...	75
Three brass platters	...	21
30 spoons	...	7
One China tea-set	...	15
10 China plates	...	20
10 cups	...	5
A set of silver utensils	...	100
Kitchen equipment including a stove	...	40
Four buckets	...	8
Two pans, one of iron and one of brass	...	15
30 *kaulis* (brass and bronze)	...	30
Two glass jugs and 10 tumblers	...	10
Earthen pots	...	10
Three brass kettles	...	24
Two sieves	...	2
Two brass leddles (*karchhis*)	...	3
Clothes old and new	...	3,000
20 complete beddings for summer and winter including quilts, sheets, pillows,		

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		Rs.
bed-carpets, etc. including four silken beddings also	...	800
12 old cots	...	96
Five folding *niwari palangs*	...	300
12 chairs	...	120
Three tables	...	30
One man-sized mirror	...	30
Five big tin boxes (*sandooks*) for keeping clothes and quilts, etc.	...	120
Two pairs of bullocks	...	1,000
Two buffaloes with young ones	...	600
One cow with her calf	...	100
One hand-folder cutting machine	...	40
Two yokes, ploughs, spades, etc.	...	50
Golden ornaments	...	2,000
15 acres of fertile agricultural land	...	15,000
One hand-water-pump (*nalka*)	...	200
Sundry articles	...	60
Grain and other eatables in stock including grain for seed and for feeds of bullocks and milch animals	...	1,100
	...	70,000
Books	...	150
Photos, etc.	...	400
A radio set	...	150
Two watches	...	24
One time-piece		
Total value of all the belongings of the family		98,330

Members of the family 15
(Head of family, his wife, four sons, one daughter, two daughters-in-law, 3 grand-sons, 3 grand-daughters).

In connection with income and expenditure of the Sansis I have studied 91 families which are classified into following Seven income-groups whose family budgets are also given :—

Income-group	*Annual income of families in Rs.*	*Number of families studied*
I. income-group	400	30
II. income-group	600	20

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Income-group	*Annual income of families in Rs.*	*Number of families studied*
III. income group	800	15
IV. income-group	1,200	10
V. income-group	1,800	10
VI. income-group	4,000	5
VII. income-group	8,400	1

Family Budget of Income-Group I

Members of family—5, head of the family age 40, wife age 35, 2 sons of 10 and 12 respectively and a daughter of 7 years.

Note.—Grain includes consumption by the family and its guests, as well as small quantities sold to village shop-keepers and itinerary vendors and hawkers.

INCOME	Rs.	EXPENDITURE	Rs.
Collection of grain at harvest, 6 maunds	96	(1) **Food :**	
Collection of grain by *Kalaan* twice a year, 1½ maunds	24	Wheat 18 maunds	288
Casual wages in the year	80	Pulses	90
Laags procured from the Jats	40	Salt, chillies, spices and oil, etc.	48
Picking of cotton & gleaning of *sila* by the women	60	(2) **Clothing :**	
Wool from ten sheep	40	2 turbans of coarse muslin	6
Sale of two rams	40	10 shirts	20
Sundry jobs	20	5 dhotis	14
		4 pairs of shoes	10
Total income	400	2 *salwars*	10
Income per capita	80	2 *dopattas*	5
		(3) Rituals and social expenses	12
		(4) Voluntary expenses, smoking and drinking etc.	12
		(5) Sundry expenses	10
		Total expenditure	525

This family has a deficit budget of Rs. 125 a year. It meets deficit by collecting daily flour and grain from the households of

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the village and thus the main expenditure of food is maintained. Sometimes they attain secondhand and new clothes from the Jats and other high castes, by way of donation, like the Granthi, the Brahman, etc. So the family members of this income-group run into debt only when they have to meet high expenses at the time of marriages and some other expensive social functions. Otherwise they can get on with their primary needs without being indebted.

Income-Group II

Members—6 : 3 adults and 3 minors.

INCOME	Rs.
Grain collection at the time of harvest, 12 maunds	192
Grain collection by *kalaan* 1½ maunds	24
Casual wages	134
Laags	40
Women's cotton picking and *sila*, etc.	60
Sale of pigs	120
Sundry jobs	30
Total income	600
Income per capita	100

EXPENDITURE	Rs.
(1) **Food :**	
Wheat 21 maunds	336
Pulses	115
Salt, chillies, spices and oil, etc.	60
(2) **Clothing :**	
turbans	12
12 shirts, 6 for adults and 6 for minors	26
6 Dhotis	12
2 *salwars*	10
2 *dopattas*	4
2 extra sheets	6
8 pairs of shoes	20
(3) Rituals and other social functions	16
(4) Other voluntary and miscellaneous expenses	30
Total Expenditure	647

This income-group is also deficit in its income by Rs. 47 which it meets like the members of the first income-group.

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INCOME-GROUP III

Members of the family—7 : 4 adults and 3 minors.

INCOME	Rs.	EXPENDITURE	Rs.
Grain at the time of harvest, 15 maunds	240	(1) **Food :**	
Kalaan grain, 2 maunds	32	Wheat 27 maunds	432
Casual wages	163	Pulses & vegetables	120
Laags	50	Salt, chillies, spices and oil, etc.	70
Women's cotton picking and *sila*, etc.	60	Ghee	20
Sale of wool of 20 sheep	120	(2) **Clothing :**	
Sale of 7 rams	105	8 turbans	24
Sundry jobs	30	14 shirts, 8 for adults and 6 for children	32
		8 dhotis	16
Total income	800	4 sheets	12
Income per capita	114.28	2 *dopattas*	4
		3 extra sheets	9
		10 pairs of shoes	25
		(3) Education of children	20
		(4) Social and ritual expenses	20
		(5) Voluntary expenses	20
		(6) Miscellaneous expenses	30
		Total expenditure	854

This income-group also has deficit budget of Rs. 54 which is met by borrowing as the members of this income-group do not beg.

INCOME-GROUP IV

Members of family—6 : 4 adults and 2 minors. A family of a village Patwari who lives in his own house in his native village.

INCOME	Rs.	EXPENDITURE	Rs.
Annual salary	1,200	(1) **Food :**	
Income per capita	200	Wheat 25 maunds	450

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EXPENDITURE

	Rs.
Pulses and vegetables	150
Salt, chillies, rice, spices, and oil etc.	100
Ghee	48
Sugar	48
Tea	6
Milk	84
Fruits	30
(2) **Clothes:**	
4 pants	30
2 coats	25
2 pairs of boots	14
18 shirts	45
3 turbans of fine muslin	15
4 pairs of ordinary socks	2
8 sheets	12
4 *dopattas*	12
3 *salwars*	15
2 sweaters	10
(3) Repair of cycle	24
(4) Education of children	30
(5) Social expenses	30
(6) Voluntary expenses	20
(7) Miscellaneous	30
Total expenditure	1,230

This income-group has about a balanced family budget.

Income-Group V

Members of family—7 : 2 adults and 5 minors. A family of a clerk living in a city.

INCOME

	Rs.
Annual salary	1,800.00
Income per capita	257.14

EXPENDITURE

	Rs.
(1) **Food:**	
Wheat 25 maunds	400
Pulses and vegetables	200
Spices, chillies, salt and sarson oil	110

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EXPENDITURE	
Ghee	70
Sugar	50
Tea	8
Milk, one seer a day	180
Fruits	40
(2) **Clothes :**	
5 pants	60
2 coats	30
2 pairs of boots	28
10 pairs of shoes	30
21 shirts	84
8 sheets	32
4 pairs of socks	3
4 *dopattas*	12
3 *salwars*	21
1 blanket	26
(3) Repair of shoes	10
(4) Washing and bathing soaps and toilet oils	32
(5) Repair of cycle	24
(6) House rent including electric and water charges	170
(7) Recreational expenses, cinema, etc.	20
(8) Education of children	40
(9) Voluntary expenses	40
(10) Social expenses	40
(11) Miscellaneous	40
Total Expenditure	1,800

This family also has a balanced budget.

INCOME-GROUP VI

Five members : 2 adults and 3 minors. A family of a police officer.

INCOME	Rs.
Annual at Rs. 350 per months	4,200
Income per capita	840

EXPENDITURE	Rs.
(1) **Food :**	
Wheat 18 maunds	288
Rice 2 maunds	60

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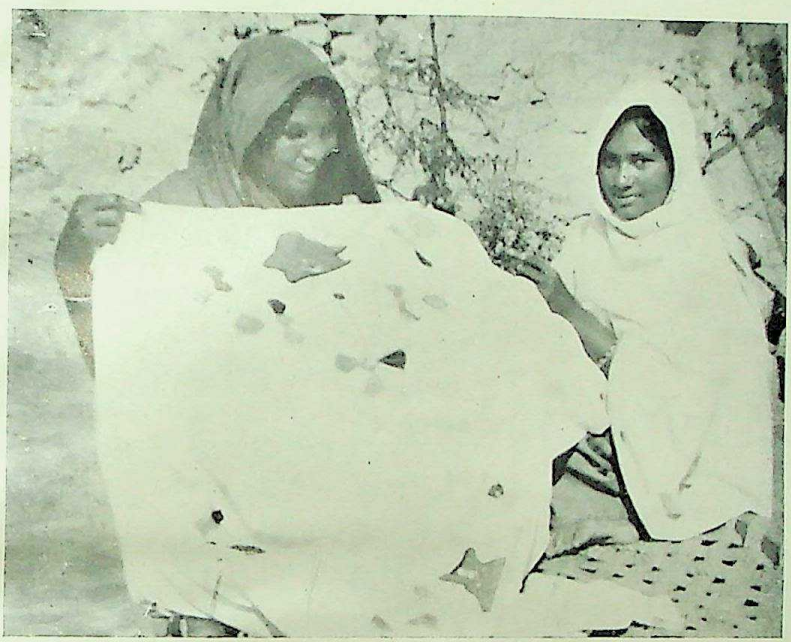

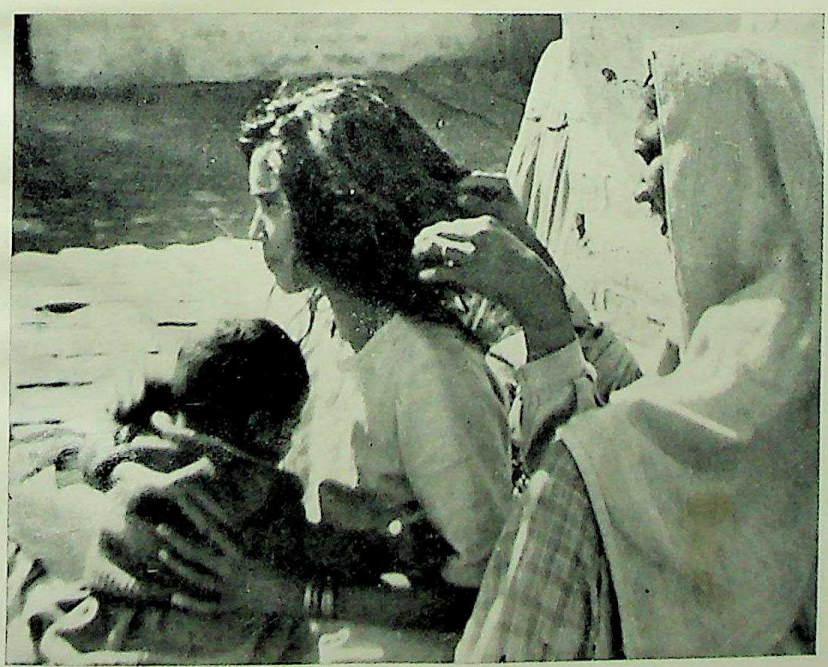

A Sansi mother and her daughter. *Top.* Doing embroidery. *Bottom.* Grooming the hair.

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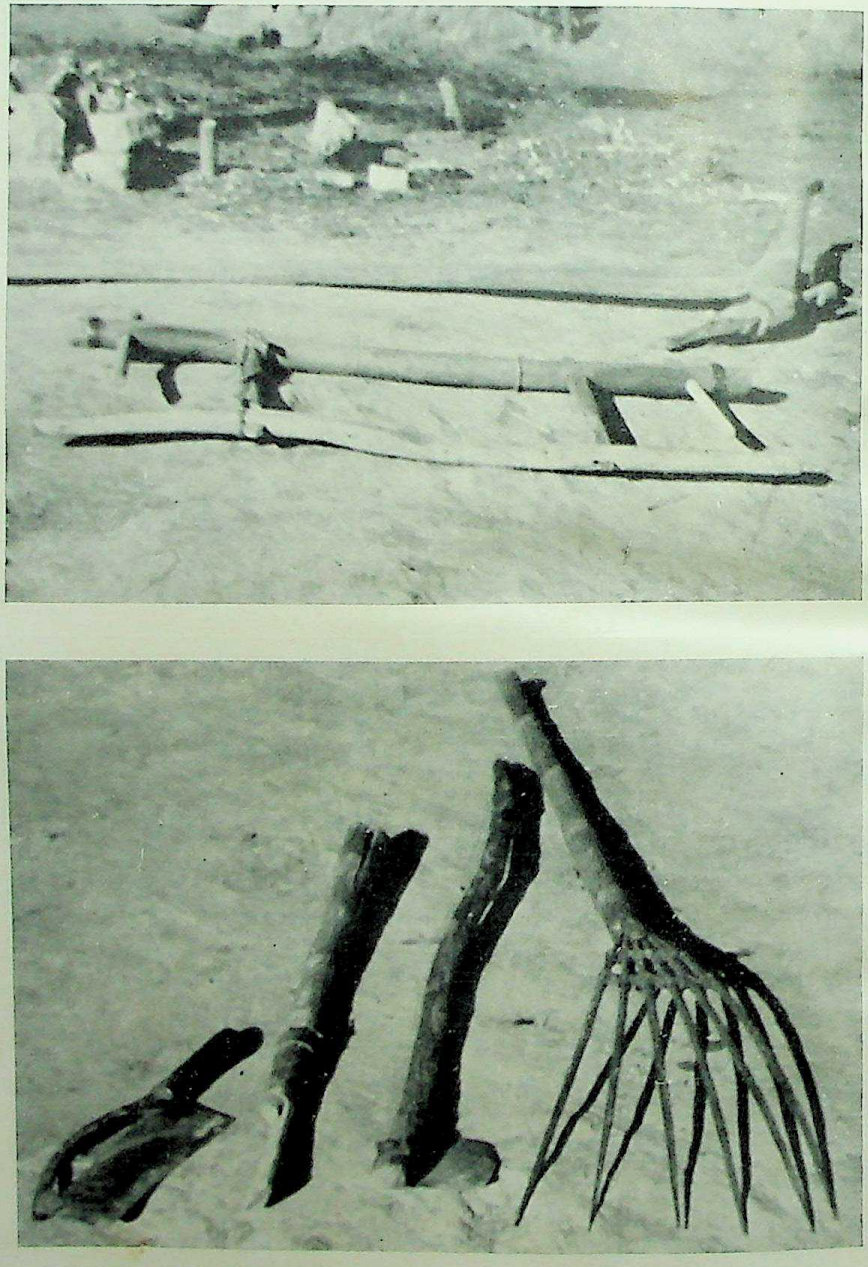
AGRICULTURAL TOOLS OF SANSI FARMERS



Top. Plough (Hal) and Yoke (Panjali). *Bottom.* Toka or Gandasa, Gandhala or Chuha, Bagauri or hoe and Trangli.

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EXPENDITURE	Rs.
Pulses, vegetables and meat	250
Spices, salt, chillies and oil, etc.	100
Ghee	96
Tea	8
Milk at 2 seers a day	360
Fruits	360
Sugar	72
(2) **Clothing :**	
6 pants	72
2 warm pants	50
2 coats ordinary	30
2 coats for women (warm)	100
3 pairs of boots	45
25 shirts	75
6 pairs of socks	4
4 *dopattas*	12
2 blankets	50
8 pairs of shoes	40
(3) Toilet, oil and soap for bathing and washing	40
Washing and laundry expenses of clothes	60
(4) Repair of cycle	24
(5) House-rent including electric and water charges	360
(6) Recreational expenses : Radio license, cinema, etc.	55
(7) Education of children	60
(8) Voluntary expenses	60
(9) Social expenses	60
(10) Books and newspapers	100
(11) Miscellaneous	100
Total Expenditure	2,991

This family has a yearly saving of Rs. 1,209.

Income Group VII.

Members 6: 5 adults, 1 minor (Mother and father of the employee who is a gazetted officer, a younger sister and a younger brother studying in college, wife and a child.)

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INCOME		EXPENDITURE	Rs.
Annual salary at Rs. 700 per month	Rs. 8,400	(1) **Food:**	
		Wheat 20 maunds	320
		Rice 2 maunds	64
		Pulses, vegetables and meat	130
		Desi ghee	360
		Tea	8
		Milk, at 3 seers a day	540
		Salt, spices, chillies and oil, etc.	100
		Fruits	540
		Sugar	72
		(2) **Clothing:**	
		16 pyjamas	64
		30 shirts of superior cloth	240
		12 turbans	60
		14 underwears	28
		18 banians	18
		4 dhotis (adults)	16
		10 *salwars*	17
		9 *dopattas*	27
		12 sheets	48
		10 pairs of shoes	150
		8 towels	16
		Necessary warm clothes	200
		20 pairs of socks	20
		3 dozen handkerchiefs	18
		(3) House-rent including electric charges and water charges at Rs. 120 per month	1,440
		(4) Washing and bathing soaps and toilets	50
		(5) Laundry charges	120
		(6) Repair of cycle	24
		(7) Income tax	240
		(8) Educational expenses	300
		(9) Recreational expenses including radio license	50
		(10) Voluntary expenses	50
		(11) Social expenses	150
		(12) Miscellaneous	150
		Total expenditure	5,630

The family has a yearly saving of Rs. 2,770.

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A careful study of the above family budgets shows that the first income group has the deficit budget. The first two groups beg but the third income group in spite of having deficit budget does not beg and satisfies its wants by borrowing. The fourth income group is of school teachers, patwaris, etc. They have balanced budgets due to their frugal habits and partly for having their own houses to live in. The fifth group consists of clerks, living in the cities, who hardly meet their expenditure with a balanced budget. The sixth and seventh income groups have a fair saving but there are only a few families of this standard of living. A large majority of the Sansi population falls in the first three groups and accordingly they represent the real and poor economic condition of this community. Consequently tremendous socio-economic efforts and assistance are needed to raise the economic standard of these people.

Mobility of Labour

The Indians are by disposition a home-bound people. Education has now broken many barriers but still the poor people are confined to a radius of a few miles from their birth place. Till very recent times Indian labour used to be bound to its ancestral acres, but now things have changed to a great extent. Some of the labouring communities are comparatively more housebound. The Sansis lie between adventurous and home-loving people.

It is a common practice amongst some male adult Sansis to go even 40 or 50 miles away to work as agricultural labourers or to join earth work on roads, railway lines and bridges, etc. I have seen 100 male Sansis working in factories and mills situated in different cities, hundreds of miles away from their native places. But except for Government employees it is not possible to see any Sansi working as a labourer out of Punjab. It can be surely said that because of the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, the Sansis will be seen in different parts of India working as labourers, being emancipated from the restrictions which were imposed on their movements, by the Criminal Tribes Act.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

"Creeds grow so thick along the way their boughs hide God"
—LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

LIKE THEIR OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE, the religious tendencies of the Sansis have also undergone several changes, particularly in the past fifty years. In the Punjab the religious changes of this community are remarkable after the partition of this land of five rivers. Previously, the Sansis, like many other wandering tribes, had a form of Hindu religion though it was primitive and crude in form. In their everyday life, we find Hindu rites and customs, superstitions, ordeals, oaths and omens. So it goes without saying that in the past the bulk of the Sansi population was Hindu and only a negligible number of this community professed Sikh religion as is clear from the perusal of the census reports of the Punjab. In 1881 there were only 401 Sikh Sansis (1.87 per cent of the total population of 21,309), in the whole province. Forty years after, in 1921, instead of increasing, the Sikh Sansis were only 98 in the province (0.37 per cent of the total population of 29,272), but in 1931 that number rose to 2,469 (7.43 per cent of their total population of 33,228). From 1931 onwards, the Sansis began to embrace Sikhism in more and more numbers and Sardar Hari Singh, the then Deputy Commissioner of the Criminal Tribes of Punjab played a great role in persuading thousands of persons of this ethnic group to become Sikhs, and he succeeded in doing it.

After 1947 every community tried to take the backward classes into its fold keeping in view the need and importance of votes in democratic India. More concessions were earmarked for the uplift of these people, but the condition of their being Hindu was imposed on them, which put an obstacle in the way of these people to embrace Sikhism as they could not avail themselves of the advantages reserved for the uplift of the neglected people, without being Hindus. Hence this was rather the inhibiting factor in the choice of their religious life.

The partition of India gave a clear expression to the religious

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tendencies of these people. West Punjab, having 16 districts, went to West Pakistan and thirteen districts came to East Punjab, India. All the Hindus and the Sikhs of West Punjab migrated to India and the Muslims of East Punjab migrated to West Pakistan. Hundreds of Sansi families of West Punjab migrated to India. All the Sansis who had gone with their Sikh *jajmans*, to the newly settled colonies and districts of Sheikhupura, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan and Sargodha, returned to India along with their Sikh patrons. On the other hand there was not even a single Sansi family of East Punjab and Punjab states which migrated to Pakistan. The Sansis of West Punjab rapidly followed the ways of Islam, after the partition of the Punjab in 1947, under the political circumstances. I went to West Punjab in 1952, in connection with the collection of data of this research work. At Sacha Sauda (district Sheikhupura), many Sansis came to see me and I noted that the Sansis of the villages of Ajanianwala, Khanqah Dogran, Miyan Ali, Kakkar, Nanak Kot, Sarwar, Kot Nakka, Gajiana, Awan, Baddoratta and those of hundreds of other villages of West Punjab had embraced Islam though they were Hindus up to 1947, the year in which the Punjab was partitioned.

It may be mentioned that this religious ramification of the Sansis is not typical to them only, but it is also present in the case of Sikh and Hindu Jats of the Punjab. In the West Punjab since centuries, the Virk, the Varaich, the Goraya, the Sandhu, the Bajwa, the Ghuman, the Man, the Cheema and many other castes of the Jats were Sikh as well as Muslim, and sometimes they were found living in the same village. After partition, the Sikh Jats of these castes came to India whereas their Mohammadan caste-brothers are now living in the West Punjab.

After the partition of the province the census was taken in 1951 but no caste-wise figures were recorded. At present the Sansis are found to be religiously divided into following groups :—

1. Most of the Sansis are Hindu in the Punjab (India), tending to observe Hinduism in its proper ritual, ceremonial and formal ways.
2. Some of the Sansis are yet hackneyed in their religious customs and beliefs and they worship their ancestral god Raja Sansmal and other ancestors.
3. In the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ferozepore, Ludhiana, Ambala and former Sikh states the Sansis are mostly full-fledged Sikhs.

Besides the Sikh Sansis of East Punjab, 1,000 Sikh Sansis have

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settled in Delhi, after their migration from different districts of West Punjab. They are living in the colonies of Kasturba Nagar, Moti Nagar and Kingsway Camp in Delhi. At Kasturba Nagar they have built a Gurdwara. During my tours and enquiries I saw about 5,000 well-settled Sikh Sansis in different parts of the Punjab.

Now another question arises, "Why have thousands of Sansis embraced Sikhism to-day, whereas there were only 98 Sikh Sansis in 1921 according to the record of the census report of 1921?" Before answering this question it is necessary to clarify that the Sikh Sansis are in no way connected with the Mazahbis. It was noticed by Ibbetson in the census report of 1881 and was again affirmed by Rose in clear-cut words, "The Sikh Sansis wear the *Kes*, but do not enrol themselves among the Mazahbis."[1] But on the other hand we read about the Mazahbis, "Mazahbi means nothing more than a member of scavenger class converted to Sikhism."[2]

It has already been mentioned that according to the Constitution of India only the Hindu backward classes were entitled to reserved concessions. After partition the Sikhs began an organized struggle for getting equal rights for all the downtrodden of whatever religion they may be. The idea was that in a secular and democratic state special concessions should be given to all who deserve on the basis of poverty, blood and backwardness and not on the ground of their belief or religion. After a great deal of discussion an amendment was made in the Constitution of India. Before any amendment was made the President of India declared and it was published in the Gazetteer of India, Ministry of Law, New Delhi, of the 10 August 1950. The order is known as "The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) order 1950". In its paragraph 2, we read, "Notwithstanding anything contained in paragraph 2, no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled caste." So according to this declaration of the President, it was necessary for the caste concerned to belong to Hinduism in order to get reserved rights and privileges.

The Sikhs demanded the reserved rights for the Sikh depressed classes like the Hindu depressed classes, but the Congress Government refused on the basis of the para, "That would have been logical position because strictly speaking untouchability being peculiar feature of Hinduism only, no community belonging to any other separate religion could legitimately claim the concessions

1. Rose, H.A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, p. 362. Lahore, 1914.
2. ibid., p. 75.

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reserved for the Untouchables of the Hindu Community."[1]

The Sikh leaders put up a note to the Indian Government, "For purpose of this questionnaire the word 'Hindu' includes Sikh, Jains, etc." On this plea, the Backward Classes Commission concluded, "It is our view that the Sikhs constitute an integral part of the broader Hindu religion. Racially, culturally, traditionally, Sikhs are an integral part of Hindu fold like Arya Samajists, Brahma Samajists, the Indian Buddhists and Jains. Although in theory the Sikhs do not subscribe to caste system, in actual practice they cling to many of the Hindu traditions and practices—including that of Untouchability. There are cases where Sikhs are found to marry with non-Sikhs of the same caste. We recommended, therefore, that those communities or groups who are treated as Untouchables among the Sikhs should be included in the list of the scheduled "castes".[2]

As a result, the President of India amended the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) order 1950, "Provided that every member of the Ramdasi, Kabir Panthai, Mazahabi, or Sikligar caste resident in Punjab or Patiala and East Punjab States Union should in relation to that State be deemed to be a member of the scheduled castes whether he professes the Hindu or the Sikh religion."

In spite of this amendment the full problem of the Sikhs was not solved as only four Sikh depressed castes were given the reserved rights, whereas the demand of the Sikhs was for all the Sikh depressed classes. In 1953, after a great struggle, all the Sikh scheduled castes were given all the reserved rights which were available to Hindu scheduled castes and it is a notable fact in the history of this struggle of the Sikh community that the struggle arose out of the case of a Sansi young man who was exceptionally highly qualified. He was asked to write himself a Hindu for getting reserved rights. He suffered and sacrificed a lot but did not budge an inch from his Sikh faith, just for some advantages which could have fetched him a great career in Government Service or in political life.

Now the former condition referred to above has been waived and this is why thousands of Sansis have become Sikhs in the East Punjab. Sikhism suits them more than Hinduism as, in its doctrine, Sikhism is a religion of casteless society which particularly attracts the people who have been victimised by the Hindu caste system. Even socio-economically, Sikhism suits them more in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Feroze-

1. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission*, Vol. I, p. 30. 1956.
2. ibid., pp. 29, 30.

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pur, Ludhiana, Ambala, Patiala, Sangrur, Fatehgarh, Bhatinda, etc. which are predominantly populated by the Sikhs. The present religious tendency of the Sansis of the Punjab clearly indicates that their devotion to Sikhism is increasing day by day. At present some Sikh Sansis have great respect among the Sikhs.

The Sansis of the districts of Karnal, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Hissar and hilly tracts of the East Punjab are Hindu. I have seen some Hindu Sansis who have renounced the world as ascetics or Sadhus.

Now we will describe their superstitions, omens, worship and festivals which constitute an integral part of the religious beliefs and practices of a community.

Superstitions

Most men, primitive or modern, barbarian or civilized, black or white, rich or poor, live in two worlds. There is the actual material world in which a tree to one is a tree to the other and a sea to one is a sea to other. Fire, heat, cold, darkness and sunshine have the same meaning to and effect on all of them. But besides this there is another world. This world is not the same for all. The mental world of one is entirely different from the mental world of the other. The mind of primitive man is full of hobgoblins, ghosts, *badawas*, *churels* and jins which a rational and modern man does not accept. Religion and superstitions are allied to a great extent, but superstition is a false and unfounded belief in supernatural agencies. A modern man believes that even though such agencies exist, they cannot do any harm to him because they are under the sway of a supreme power in which he believes and calls God. So a true believer or a free-thinker of modern times ignores belief in supernatural agencies, while a superstitious person trembles and stands in awe and fear. To a common Sansi all the animate and inanimate things may be the abode of spirits of one sort or another. The Sansis believe that the spirits may be helpful and friendly, but generally they are inimical to men and give them many kinds of troubles. I have discussed the spirit world of Sansis with many and especially with their 'chelas' or the tribal saints who control spirits and scare them away. They describe the following types of spirits which usually interfere with their life.

1. *Churel* or *Balaa.* A Churel is the spirit of a woman who has died in great distress, agony and anguish of child birth. The spirit of a Churel is thought to be the most appalling of all the

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bad spirits. She has a very grisly appearance and if one looks at her feet they are turned backwards. Her front is very beautiful and bewitching, but her back is very ugly, black and putrid. She often seduces men and then does great harm to them. Some of the tribes rip open the womb of a pregnant woman and take out the foetus so that the dead mother may not become a Churel. According to Crooke[1], some tribes bury the dead mother and the foetus on the opposite sides of a stream, as they believe that the spirits cannot cross water. But the Sansis do not take the foetus out of the mother's womb. They take preventive measures as described in the death ceremonies of the pregnant mother.

2. *Jin.* According to most of the sorcerers, the Jin is a spirit of a Mohamedan. A Jin can assume many forms and he particularly attacks a beautiful unmarried girl for amorous enjoyment. The Sansis have also a great fear of a Jin.

3. *Kabbis.* This is thought to be a very dangerous demon. It has a very dreadful appearance, having long nails and long feet. The nails are used to make deep cuts in the body of the victim and if the victim resists then it pierces, with its long teeth, the body of its prey and drains out the blood. A Kabbis is exceedingly fond of sucking human blood.

4. *Bhoot or Bhootna.* It is believed that a man who dies of an accidental or sudden death of a dreaded disease is sure to become a Bhoot. A Bhoot is always the spirit of a male. A Bhoot can also assume many shapes, but generally it is invisible and enters the body, persons and house, like wind and air. A Bhoot, as a rule, does not give any trouble to his own family, but helps it. It opposes and attacks the family of the rivals or those who tease and coerce them. A Bhoot's general abode is onsidered to be the cremation ground or the grave-yard.

5. *Pret.* The spirit of a crippled, lame, deformed and mentally defective and deranged person, becomes a Pret. The spirit of a deformed woman becomes a Pretni. The Prets and Pretnis are not very harmful spirits. They are timid and pitiable. They themselves are afraid of many spirits of the jungle and it is believed that at night, out of fear, these spirits come near human habitation. Some magicians say that the Prets should be pitied and they should be given food. They also attack on being teased.

6. *Dey Danoon.* A Danoon is the spirit of a giant or a monster. It is the most powerful of all the spirits. It has a

1. Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 195. London, 1896.

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very colossal size. A Danoon lives in tall trees, in mountains, in caves, and in thickets of the jungles. A Dey Danoon is believed to be related to the *danva* mentioned in the Vedas and connected with Vrita, one of the atmospheric demons. He attacks his victims at night, catches them by the throat and sometimes strangles them to death.

7. *Rakash.* A Rakash is also a dangerous demon fond of sucking the blood of human beings. It can also assume any form. A Rakash generally attacks women with children. It can enter the house in the form of a cat, dog or ram, etc. The female type of Rakash is called Rakshni. Sometimes, she assumes the form of a very beautiful woman, seduces men and then kills them and sucks their blood. They attack at night.

8. *Matia.* This is also a very powerful and dangerous demon. It is found in the whirlwinds. He can carry away the roofs of houses, thatches and men, causes strong gales and can break, uproot and wrench trees. It is found mostly in summer when there are many whirlwinds. The people attempt to get away from whirlwind. Some Sansis and especially women and children were observed saying to a whirlwind, "*Hai bhagi bharia karman wallia, khair karin, parahan parahan langhin*" (O spirit of great destiny and grace, do us no harm and pass away from us). The people believe that if a whirlwind is disturbed by throwing a brickbat or an old and worn-out shoe at it, the demon attacks with great ferocity.

9. *Daien.* The Daien is most feared by the women-folk, and especially by those who have small children. A Daien is a living witch. She has some power of sorcery and as the superstition goes, she can eat up the livers of children. On discovering that such and such woman is a Daien, she is hated and shunned by society. The women cover and hide their children from the Daien.

10. *Badawa or Chhalleda.* A Badawa is the spirit of a very playful, jovial and nefarious boy. It is called Chhalleda which means one that plays a *Chhal* or a trick on others. His purpose is simple and innocent and he bamboozles, beguiles and befools a person just for the sake of fun and for nothing more. He plays many harmful tricks on the people. They say that a Badawa has a scalp-lock *(choti or bodi)* on his head. From this it can be concluded that according to the belief of superstitious people a Badawa is always a spirit of a Hindu boy. If any person gets hold of his *bodi,* then the Badawa becomes his slave and serves

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his purposes. The sorcerers tell that when a Badawa is caught fast by his *bodi* he cries, "*Hai O pahria, naale meri bodi putti, naale mainoon maria*" (O take pity, you have pulled my scalp-lock and beaten me as well). The Badawa can assume many forms of animals.

EVIL EYE. The most prevalent belief is that the eyes of some persons are possessed of evil powers which can injure other persons. Superstitious people think that the glance of an evil eye pierces through a person just like an arrow shot from a bow. This is why the evil eye is called *Nazar*. The children are particularly susceptible to the effect of evil eyes and they readily lose health or any other quality that they possess in an enviable measure. Sometimes the evil eye may become the cause of illness and even of death. Plants and animals are also affected by it. Bad crops, abortion, miscarriage, disease and death of animals are sometimes attributed to the malevolent effect of the evil eye. Sometimes an accidental damage to a new thing is also considered to be due to the effect of evil eye. Any mishap whose cause remains unknown is ascribed to the effect of evil eye.

SUPERSTITIONS REGARDING SNAKE-BITE AND OTHER POISONOUS BITES. There is another time-honoured cult among the Indians and the Sansis have also a deep-rooted belief in it. It is commonly found in the Punjab that Gugga Pir is worshipped as the god of snakes. Some persons know some *mantras* or incantations whose occult and efficacious power is possessed by them after long and regular ascetic acts and meditations. When anybody is bitten by a snake a 'Mandrai' is called for immediately who comes and with a regular system mutters his charms for the cure of the patient. In most cases the remedy is not sought from medicines and the Mandris are the only persons to be depended upon. In case of bites of poisonous insects like scorpions also, the Mandri casts away the pain with the magical power of his incantations. Similarly people depend on the Mandris when a mad dog bites. But now they have begun to consult the doctors and physicians for these troubles.

Pains and Aches. Leg and head-aches are also treated by Mandris. Sometimes, enchanted ashes are rubbed on the painful part of the body. Sometimes, enchanted water or other edibles are also given to the patients as a cure. The enchanted threads prepared by incantations are also kept or tied round the legs, necks, arms and waist for dispelling different ailments.

Black and White Magic. Black magic or 'Kaala Ilum' is

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especially dreaded by all the people. They believe that the people of Bengal or the people of hills or mountains are very dangerous magicians. Black magic does harm to enemies, or it is malevolent magic, but the white magic is used for both the purposes. White magic is used for bringing good luck, for increasing love between the people, for curing diseases and for winning success. By black magic many people attack each other by using Taviz, Masaan, Kujja or by Mutth. Some superstitious people and magicians say that, if under certain incantations, needles are driven into a lemon, the enemy is injured like the lemon, wherever he or she may be.

Dwelling of Spirits. Generally the spirits dwell in the cremation grounds or grave-yards. They also live in desolate places, old, broken or dry trees. Some spirits live in the riverain and littoral sites. Some people believe that spirits live in shattered houses and walls, and on the mounds of ancient habitations. A place haunted by spirits is called 'Pacca Than'.

Use of Spirits. Some magicians have a control over certain spirits and use them for good or evil. It is interesting that the Churel lives mostly in the neem or tamarind tree and superstitious people believe that this tree should be particularly avoided at night.

Dispelling the Spirits

1. *Incantations or Mantras.* The most universal method of casting out evil spirits, is by reciting, writing or using mantras or incantations. In the beginning the mantras were confined to the Vedic text but now a *mantra* is 'extended to all magical forms of words, letters, sounds or any hocus-pocus which brings good luck to the happy possessor and evil to his enemies. The spirits are cast out, and the effect of evil eye is cured by *mantras.* They are often inscribed on paper, or the ink in which they are written is drunk or the papers on which they are written are kept in metal cases or talismans.[1] Some Sansi Chelas or Saurias can cast out spirits. One may not believe in spirits and ghosts but none can ignore the belief in spirits in the Sansi sociology. When a person is under the influence of a spirit of any type, the Chelas are called and the patient is seated before them. They give him a fumigation (*dhoop*) of *guggal* and then they drive a

1. ibid., p. 299.

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stab or any other iron weapon into the ground. After this, the Chelas begin to recite a long incantation which is given below verbatim as I procured it from two Sansi Chelas of the village of Isharke in the district of Sheikhupura (West Punjab).

INCANTATION (MANTRA)

Madan Shah Ali Ko dhanak khaich baan mar
Le kar Shah Shames ka nam, poara nishan taan mar
Guru Gorakh Naath ki kripase, sab marhi masan mar.
Hanuman, Narsingh ko pakar kar pichhar mar
Guru Gian ki potli jadoogar, tamam ke tamam mar
Kacha masaan mar de, bol Lachhman, Sita, Ram Ram
Sab jin, bhoot, bandh liya jab se pia apne murshad se jaam
Sab dev danoon pari pret, hooae khidmatgar hamare
Jab se parha, sbahad, sidaq se Nanak Guru ke dware
Nanak hamari tarf, aanch na lagat, bandh de jin bhoot har jat pat
Bir, jodh, aur kete but prust, aisi lagao zarb keh do kar mast
Ram Lachhman Sita ke ang ang bandh de, shamshir bandh de ttr tafang bandh de
Banduk, tubuk, bhala, sota, matehar bandh de
Chhota bara pir faqir Shahar ka Shahar bandh de
Parbat va pahar, jodha, soora bandh de
Rag nad, jogi jangam sab poora bandh de
Darakhat, mal, khazana, hava ko bandh de
Samund Sagar, aal pataal, chalte daraya ko bandh de
Sab ore ghari ghari pahar pahar bandh de
Aal pataal aur nagri, gaam, shahar bandh de
Ghat ghat, pran pran, ko bandh de
Chausath jognan, zamin, asmaan bandh de
Saaz baaz, dholak, tamboraa, chhatis, rag ko bandh de
Paani, khak, paun, aag ko bandh de
Sarap, bichhu, zahri naag ko bandh de
Rewa bandh de jamna ko bandh de
Sarashwati ko bandh de Krishna, Narabada, Godawari ko bandh de
Jin, bhoot, churel, pret, danoon, tamaam bandh de
Mere guru pir ki shakti se sab kalam ko bandh de
Nihaloo, Gandoo, vadere ko faryad kar
Hetam, Narotam aur babe Toto ko yaad kar
Har aafit hazar ho mere guru ke darbar par

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Nikaldoon sub jin, bhoot, churel, pret ko maar maar kar.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Shoot Madan Shah Ali with an arrow stretching your bow.
By the grace of Shah Shamas hit your target perfectly.
By the Kindness of Guru Gorakh Nath do away with the evils of cremation ground.
Knock down Hanuman and Narsingh.
With the force of the knowledge of your Guru kill all the magicians.
Utter, Lachhman, Sita, Ram and kill evil spirits.
I have tied all the *jins* and *bhoots* since I have drunk a cup from my teacher.
All the evil spirits and monsters have become our slaves.
Since I have recited Shabad at the door of Guru Nanak,
Nanak is on our side, none can harm us. Kill all the evil spirits of all the communities.
All the brave and idol-worshippers should be brought under control.
Bind all the organs, Lachhman, Ram and Sita, bind sword and gun.
Bind gun, musket, spear, mortar, etc.
Bind all the small and great, saints, beggars and whole of the city.
Bind the mountain, the brave.
Bind music, sound, yogi, ascetic completely.
Bind the tree, wealth, treasure and wind.
Bind oceans and seas and bind underworlds and running rivers.
Bind everything in all the directions at all the times.
Bind underworlds, habitations, villages and cities.
Bind the very inside of hearts.
Bind sixty-four jognan, earth and sky.
Bind all the musical instruments, *dholak* and thirty-six ragas.
Bind snakes, scorpians and poisonous cobras.
Bind the devil with a strong lock of chain.
Bind the fairy named Ashak and bind whole of the country of the fairies.
Bind the river Rewa and Jamna.

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Bind the rivers Saraswati, Krishna, Narbada and Godawari.
Bind Jin, Bhoot, Churel, Pret, Danoon, all of them.
Remember your sainted dead ancestors, Nihaloo, Gandoo.
Remember Hetam, Narotam and Baba Toto.
Every evil spirit must present itself before my Guru.
I will cast out all the Jins, Bhoots, Churels and Prets with a sound beating.

A close study of this incantation clearly indicates that it is surely a distortion of some old Hindu *mantra*. With the passage of time the inclusion of the names of some gods, goddesses, prophets, and gurus of later times have also crept into this *mantra*. Anyhow this *mantra* is a good indication of the belief and culture of the Sansis, as it has been travelling since ancient times. Rose[1] has also given a similar *mantra* of the Sansi Chelas of Punjab. But as he himself confesses the *mantra* remained unintelligible to him and his reproduction of the incantation is also unintelligible.

After reciting this incantation in regular rhythm, the Chela comes into afflatus and wags his head in quick movements. After a few minutes the patient also begins to wag his head and now both of them wag their heads rapidly. This is called '*khedna*'. Then the Chela questions the whereabouts of the spirit in a very dignified voice. At this time it is believed that the spirit is present and it is actually this spirit which is wagging its head. The spirit has to speak through the patient and act through the body of the patient, but the spirit obstinately keeps silent. Then the Chela catches the patient by the locks and a dispute begins between them. At last by beating and threatening to put excreta or beef in the mouth of spirit, if the spirit is Hindu, and pork in case of a Muslim spirit, the spirit is made to speak through the mouth of the patient. The Chela orders the spirit to give up the patient but the spirit is stubborn. At this time the Chela slaps the patient or beats him with his stick. At last the spirit promises to leave the patient readily and never revisit him or his family. The author has seen such occasions of casting out spirits many a time. Once it was seen that a spirit was about to leave the patient; the Chela said to it, "I do not believe in you. You are dishonest. How can I believe that you will leave the patient for ever? Give me a promise of your going."

The spirit replied, "Yes, I swear by my faith that I will never haunt the patient and now I go". The Chela agreed and he left the

1. Rose, H. A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, pp. 375, 376.

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locks of the victim. I know the patient personally that he used to remain ill and in great distress in spite of using many medicines from qualified doctors. After that he never fell sick and still he is living happily, having a wife and six children.

2. *Filthy and Abusive Language.* Dirty language is also used to scare away evil spirits. They say that the nakedness of a man is also repellent to the evil spirits. So some persons while passing through the cremation grounds and grave-yards, put off their clothes.

3. *Ashes.* According to the belief of superstitious people the ashes are also very useful in getting rid of evil spirits. This is why that after birth ashes are applied to the new-born baby that no spirit should touch him, though in reality it is used for drying the body of the baby. A circle of ashes round a person is also considered useful to scare away evil spirits.

4. *Charcoal.* Similarly black charcoal is efficacious.

5. *Ornaments.* Beads and bangles are also useful in frightening the evil spirits. They believe that a certain colour repels demons and other evil spirits, but the metals are more effective than glass.

6. *Colours.* The evil spirits fear certain colours, especially black, red and yellow. It is due to these reasons that turmeric of yellow colour is used in many rites of marriages. Lamp black is put on the face of the beautiful children to protect them from evil eyes. Collyrium (*surma* or *kajjal*) is also put in the eyes for the same purpose. Red saloos and vermilion (*sandhoor*) are also used in many functions for the same errand.

7. *Metals.* Iron is especially powerful and efficacious in repelling evil spirits. Similarly copper and some other metals have their magical utility. This is the reason why some copper ornaments are used and the articles and arms made of iron are kept under the pillow of a mother who gives birth to a child.

8. *Threads.* The use of threads indicates that the evil spirits are tied with them and thus they are rendered helpless. At many functions, and particularly at marriages, the *mauli* (red and yellow threads) is extensively used for the same object.

9. *Thorns.* Some people spread thorns before the door of the house at the birth of a child so that evil spirits may not enter the house to attack the mother and the baby. We read, "At the door of the delivery the thorny branches of *bel* and *nagphani* are spread to intercept evil spirit".[1]

1. Briggs, Geo. W., *The Chamars*, p. 62. London, 1920.

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10. The leaves of certain trees are also used and it is for this reason that the leaves of mango and *shareehn* are hung at the door of the room in which the child is born.

11. *Incense and Smoke.* The smell of certain substances and their smoke attracts the gods, but dispels evil spirits. This is why that asafoetida is used for smoke, and ghee as an incense.

12. Certain figures also frighten the evil spirits. It is due to this superstition that we find that certain figures are drawn in some houses, inside and outside. The Brahmans draw figures on their foreheads for this reason.

13. *Leather.* Leather is also used as a repellent and the leather mascots are tied round the arms and necks. Sometimes we see that beautiful cows and buffaloes which have calved recently, bear some pieces of leather or a pair of worn-out shoes round their necks as a prevention against evil eye and evil spirits.

14. *Black Pots.* Some people believe that the evil spirits fear black pots, especially old earthen black pots. These are often seen placed upside down on the newly built buildings and houses. Similarly old black earthen pots (*haandis*) are hung on the stick in the fields so that the evil eye or spirits may not affect growth and yield of the crops.

15. Last but not the least is the belief of religious-minded people that hymns, couplets or any other sacred compositions, when read and recited with a pure mind, is a great force in driving away and destroying evil spirits.

Omens

Hinduism is a peculiar combination of rites, rituals, customs and ceremonies concerned with almost every phase of life. So, like many other beliefs, omens have also a conspicuous place in Indian life. An omen is any involuntary happening which predicts future events. An omen is a type of prognosis of prediction. Omens interfere in days, months and directions also. They have a concern in foods, garments, and ornaments. A Hindu is as much concerned with omens as with food regulations. This is the reason that in his tour of first general elections of independent India in 1951, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said in his speech at Ludhiana, "Hinduism is a kitchen religion." Hinduism is indeed an omen-bound creed. The Sansis are great believers in augury and some of their important omens are given below :

1. The greatest omen of Sansis is a sneeze. At the beginning

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of some work or at the time of starting on journey, if somebody sneezes, the Sansis will postpone the work of the journey, however important it may be. They have another antidote against it. Some of them do not postpone the work of the journey because of a sneeze, but they just stop for a while and they proceed with their undertaking. If a person sneezes twice in succession, it is not an ill omen.

2. If on starting on a journey anybody accidentally calls from behind, the omen is bad and it is better to postpone the business.

3. If a *teli* (oilman) is met on the way while starting on a journey, the omen is bad.

4. A widow met in good clothes is a bad omen.

5. A person met with an empty vessel is a bad omen but if met with a pitcher full of something, then the omen is good. If a pregnant mother meets a person with pitcher full of something, then the omen is still better.

6. If, by chance, oil is spilt when going somewhere, the omen is good as they believe that the enemy is avoided.

7. If one sees three men when beginning something, the omen is bad, but it is good if one sees four men sitting together in a friendly way.

8. The braying of a donkey is not a good omen, if it does from behind ; but if it brays in front of a person while going, it is good omen.

9. If a person's turban falls down while starting, it has grave consequences and the work in hand must be given up for the time being.

10. If one meets a deformed person, the omen is bad.

11. If one's path is crossed by a snake, deer, mongoose, crow, kite or a cat, the omen is very bad.

12. Meeting a mad dog or a policeman means a very dangerous omen.

13. Seeing a cow just on opening one's eyes in the morning at the time of rising means a very good omen.

14. A barber and a Brahman together can be a bad portent.

15. If, on beginning something, a dead body is seen being carried to the cremation ground or grave-yard, as a funeral procession the omen is very good because it indicates the most inevitable truth of life—death.

Regarding the background of their belief in this omen, the Sansis relate an interesting legend of their Rajput ancestors, which is briefly given below :

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They say that once a Muslim invader attacked Bhatner, the famous place of the Bhatti Rajputs of Rajputana. The Muslim enemies were five thousand in number but the Rajputs were only three hundred. The spy of the Rajputs brought in advance to them the news of the arrival and attack of the enemy and also informed them of the superiority of the invader, both in number and equipment. The Rajputs knew well how to give a brave fight to such enemies and die on the battlefield like the brave. They decided to meet the foes outside the city of Bhatner and kill or be killed. Hence the three hundred Rajputs rode on their chargers and equipping themselves with the best of armoury which they possessed, they started. Just coming out of the town wall, they saw a funeral procession carrying a dead body to the cremation ground. They relate that that was the dead body of some pious man of the town. The brave Rajputs took it to be a very terrible omen and their leader said, "I think the sight of this dead body has predicted our defeat and destruction. This is a very bad omen." It is believed that a miraculous voice came from the dead body. "O brave Rajputs, you are mistaken to take this sight to be a bad omen. This is the best omen as death wins over all the powers and plans of man and death is the greatest truth of life. Go and fight against the approaching enemies ; the success will kiss your feet." The Rajputs faced the enemy with double courage and indeed the three hundred Rajputs utterly routed the five thousand Muslim enemies. From that day onwards, this omen is thought to be a very good omen.

The meeting with a party carrying the dead body of a person for disposal is described as a good omen by Capt. D. A. Malcom[1] also.

16. If, on beginning something, or on starting on a journey some weeping persons are seen, the omen is bad.

17. The maternal uncle and his nephew (sister's son) must never sit together when it is lightning.

18. If, on starting, one sees a crow perched on somebody or on the person himself, the work must be given up.

19. The hiccup is ascribed to the remembrance of the person by some friends or relatives.

20. On beginning some work if one sees somebody fighting and bleeding, the omen is bed.

1. Malcom, D. A., The statement of Mulchand, a Sansi Decoit, given at Hyderabad, in September, 1847. See also W. H. Sleeman's Report on Budhuk alias Bagree Decoits, p. 276. Calcutta, 1849.

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21. Starting on a journey on Sunday is not considered good.

22. Wednesday is the most auspicious day for any purpose. They say, *Budh kam sudh* (Budh makes the purpose successful).

23. Like other Hindus, the Sansis do not think it good to wash hair or head on Tuesday.

24. A Brahman seen with a religious book and *tilak* on his forehead is auspicious.

25. If a lamp aglow is seen on the wayside, the omen is very good.

26. Meeting a woman with a healthy male child is an auspicious omen.

27. If a jackal crosses the way, the omen is bad.

28. If a fox or a dog howls at night it indicates the death of some member of the family or of some close relative.

29. If, on starting, a branch of tree or tree falls down suddenly, the omen is bad.

30. The owl is thought to be a very inauspicious bird and if it shrieks at night, it must be understood to invoke destruction and desolation.

31. The cry of a kite heard at night is a bad omen.

32. The fighting of cats at night is a bad omen.

33. To see a freshly broken pot when departing is a bad omen.

34. A lizard is always a good omen but if fowls are seen the omen is bad.

35. A partridge, if heard chirping on the left while one is travelling, is good ; but it is bad if it chirps on the right. It is the same when one is halting somewhere.

36. On starting, if a dog wags his head (*kan phatkana*), it forebodes danger and the work proposed is postponed.

37. If, on starting, one finds a coin, the omen is very good.

38. If one stumbles over a stone or slips and falls, while starting, the omen is very bad.

39. If, on starting, good tiding is given, the omen is very good.

40. If one sees a marriage party along with bridegroom or bride or both, the omen presages sure success and joy.

41. The Sansis have also some omens attached with dreams. If one weeps in a dream, some joy is approaching and the dream is good.

42. If one laughs whole-heartedly in a dream, some bad event is sure to take place.

43. A policeman seen in a dream is sure to have a very bad

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and harmful effect.

44. A snake, mad dog, fighting rams, fighting he-buffaloes, fighting bulls and camels seen in dreams are bad omens.

45. If one sees a dead body or one dies in dreams, it means that the dreamer will live long.

46. Dreaming of falling sick means good health.

47. To dream of a ride on elephants signifies a natural and extraordinary rise in life, because it is the kings and queens who ride on elephants.

48. To dream of visiting religious shrines and assembly of saints gives a good indication of one's pious life.

A few omens are also mentioned by Naidu[1] and Bhargava[2] but Kennedy[3], Baines[4] and Rose[5] have not said anything about their omens. However, some of the omens are mentioned by Capt. G. Ramsay[6], which he collected from the statements of the Sansi dacoits taken on 10 March 1848, at Nagpur.

Worship

It has already been mentioned that all the Sansis worship their ancestral god, Raja Sansmal, his two sons, Mahla and Beehdoo and his twenty-three grandsons who were heads of twenty-three different clans or subcastes of Sansis. At all the ceremonies, they perform propitiation (*tapaana*) invoking names of their ancestors and some other gods and goddesses. They also worship Sitla Devi, Gugga, Latanwali or Jawala of Kangra. Besides the above, they worship their following tribal sainted dead.

1. *Nihaloo Gandoo.* Nihaloo and Gandoo were two brothers. The name of their father was Atra, an inhabitant of village Othian Sohian in the district of Sialkot, in Deska Tahsil (West Punjab). They were very pious persons and they renounced the world in remembrance of God. After this renunciation of the world, they had been doing noble deeds and good services to other people. Their tombs or *Samaadhis* are situated in the village of Khanghure in Gujranwala District. The Sansis of Punjab have different

1. M. Paupa Rau Naidu, *The Criminal Tribes of India*, p. 24. Madras, 1907.
2. Bhargava, B. S., *The Criminal Tribes*, p. 75. Lucknow, 1949.
3. M. Kennedy, *Criminal Classes*, pp. 245-257.
4. Athelstane Baines, *Ethnography*, pp. 109, 151, 163. Strassburg, 1912,
5. Rose, H. A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, pp. 362-379.
6. Capt. G. Ramsay, quoted in Sleeman's Report on Bhuduk alias Bagree Decoits, pp. 262, 263. Calcutta, 1849.

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sacrificial and dedicating prayers *(sukhnas)* for the fulfilment of their wishes and desires. On their fulfilment, the Sansis go and worship at their tombs, spilling ghee and other gifts over them. Sometimes, rams and he-goats are sacrificed at their tombs. Nihaloo Gandoo are also believed to be very powerful saviours of the Sansis in scaring away evil spirits and this is the reason that they have been invoked in the incantation given in this chapter.

2. *Hem, Narotam and Toto.* These three sainted dead of the Sansis also belonged to Othian Sohian. They lived in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Their father's name was Shaunki as mentioned by Rose[1] also. Hem and Toto were possessed of great divine power. The Sansis believed that Hem and Narotam were two brothers, and they could ride on walls and make them run like horses and trains. They are also the protective gods of the Sansis and so they are worshipped. They died at Othian Sohian and their tombs are made in that area. They are worshipped by the Sansis.

3. *Fatah Shahid* (Fatah, the martyr). He is worshipped for his bravery. His tomb is found at Malla, a village of Brahmans in the Sialkot district. The tomb is constructed on an ancient mound, a little north of Malla. The Sansis tell that once in an encounter on a dark night, while fighting with his enemies, Fatah, the brave, was killed by his own brother-in-law and his sister's son *(bhanooja* and *bhanewan)* by mistake. He is acknowledged as a martyr (*shahid)* and his tomb is worshipped by the Sansis of Punjab.

4. *Faqira and Binder.* They are also the sainted dead of the Sansis. They were very pious and God-loving men. The Sansis believe in them as beneficial and protective ancestral gods.

5. *Malang Shah.* He was a famous saint of the Punjab and is revered by many communities. He was a Sansi. His father's name was Basu Sansi. He renounced the world and lived and died in jungle in the meditation of God. He is worshipped by the Sansis as a divine soul. Rose[2] also gives an account of this Sansi saint of Punjab.

6. *Mai Lakhi.* Mai Lakhi was a very pious woman. She remained a virgin and was pure all her life. She renounced worldly life and lived and died in the jungles. Her tomb is found in the village named Tatle[3] in the district of Gujranwala. The Sansis of Punjab worship her tomb also.

1. Rose, H. A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, p. 368.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

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Besides worshipping these sainted dead the Sansis annually gather to worship at the tombs of some saints at the following places:—(*i*) Pir Sakhi Sultan at Nagaha; (*ii*) At Phalaupi in Jaiselmer; (*iii*) Bibrain in Bikaner; (*iv*) Bajrang-garh in Aligarh district (U.P.); (*v*) Jawala Mukhi in Kangra district, Punjab; (*vi*) Naukhera in Etah (District U P.).

7. *Worship of Gugga.* In the month of Bhadon, the Sansis of Punjab worship Gugga, the god of snakes. They plaster their houses with cowdung. Then they prepare *choorma* of the chapatis of *dalia* (coarse-ground grains of wheat), *gur* and ghee. Then they light seven dough-lamps, putting ghee in them. Some *choorma* is placed before the burning lamps. Then all the members of the family venerate the burning lamps, prostrating before them praying to Gugga to protect them from the bites of the snakes and other poisonous animals and insects. The *choorma* thus placed before the lamp is not to be eaten by anybody. It is left as it is. The *choorma* and dough-lamps are not disturbed by anybody and they are consumed by the fowls, dogs, cats or rats, etc. The rest of the *choorma* prepared is eaten by the members of the family.

Festivals

1. *Haari da Choorma.* In the Punjab *haari* indicates the harvest of wheat, the major crop of Punjab. 'Haari da Choorma' means the *choorma* which the Sansis make after passing a happy, profitable and safe harvest. They celebrate Haari on any day in the month of Haar (May). After collection of Haari the Sansis plaster their houses with cowdung and prepare *choorma*. Then the *choorma* is offered to their tribal gods. First the *choorma* is thrown on the roof of the house invoking the names of all the ancestors who were regarded as saints. A handful of this propitiated *choorma* is retained which is distributed among all the members of the family as a *parshad* or *sharini*. Then the family eats the rest of the *choorma*.

2. *Diwali.* The Sansis pay special attention to the celebration of the Diwali festival. In the morning they rise early and all the members of the family have a bath. Then they give water to their *pitters* (dead ancestors). They also prepare some sweet dish on that day and eat it with great joy and fun. At night they illuminate the house with lamps (*deevas*—country-made earthen lamps which are lighted, putting oil into them and a wick made of twisted lint).

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3. *Haand.* Haand literally means a ramble or wandering, but the Sansis explain it as hunting. Haand is a peculiar practice of the Sansis. The Sansis are very fond of hunting Most of the Hindus, even educated, think it their sacred duty to go for hunting at the Diwali festival. Some of the old Sansis say that they have been observing this practice of hunting on the day of Diwali since very ancient times, according to the practice of their ancestors. They say that originally their ancestors used to kill a deer on this day because it was due to the illusion and mischief of a deer in the jungle that Rama and Lakshmana went out for its hunting and in their absence Sita was seized and carried away by Ravana. So they believe it to be a sacred and religious duty to kill some deer on the Diwali festival on which Rama, Lakshmana and Sita came back to Ayodhya, after a long exile of 14 years.

The principle is that they must hunt within their own village and on this day they should not encroach on the hunting grounds of other Sansis of neighbouring villages. The game killed should be divided among all the members of the Sansis present in the hunting party. This is a very fine expression of their tribal unity. Even a Sansi passing by who is present at the spot of distribution will get his full share of the game. There is no question of having hounds; one simply joins the hunting party up to the distribution of the hunted game. If they kill sufficient game, then they think it to be a good and auspicious omen for the whole of the coming year.

Besides these festivals they celebrate almost all the festivals of the Hindus and the Sikhs in accordance with the belief of the people among whom they live.

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CHAPTER NINE

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

"Society has only one law, and that is custom. Even religion is socially powerful only so far as has custom on its side."
—HAMERTON

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION of Sansis is very old and strong. Their community feelings are very conspicuous. Although their separate families are scattered from village to village throughout the Punjab, yet their emotional unity seems to be unbroken regarding their community feelings. They are divided into the two main moities of Mahla and Beehdoo after the names of their famous ancestors who were brothers and sons of Raja Sansmal. Beehdoo had twelve sons and Mahla had eleven sons. Therefore the moities, Mahla and Beehdoo, are further divided into twenty-three sub-castes named after the names of their respective ancestors, the respective sons of Mahla and Beehdoo. At every function, at the time of ancestral worship they say, "*Ya Sansmal Sansi, Mahla, Beehdoo, yaran, baran, jata biradriya maha sukh rekhwia je*" (O Sansmal Sansi, Mahla, Beehdoo eleven and twelve, kindly bless our community with peace). Whenever some unfamiliar Sansis meet together all over India, they ask each other, "*Re bhai taun Mahle kaen jan Beehdooa ka?*" (O brother, do you belong to Mahla or Beehdoo?).

Their social cohesion and sympathy go on increasing as their mutual relationship comes down from Raja Sansmal, Mahla and Beehdoo. Their relationship becomes closest and strongest when it comes down to their clanish or sub-clanish ancestors. The twenty-three subcastes are exogamous and so are their hundreds of sub-clans. On the whole the Sansi community is endogamous.

They call their sub-clans *deras*. Originally a *dera* meant a temporary encampment under the control of a leader. It has already been mentioned in the history and ancestry of the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh that his ancestor Kalu Sansi after leaving Pindi Bhattian, joined the members of his tribe who had encamped at Sansri which was afterwards known as Raja Sansi. As a matter of fact that encampment was a *dera*. A century or so agomost of

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the Sansis were wandering in the form of *deras* and according to circumstances and with the passage of time these *deras* were scattered in different directions and as the circumstances allowed them they permanently settled at certain places and with the increase of their population different families of a *dera* settled in different villages. The families once belonging to the same *dera* under the leadership of the same ancestor became a sub-clan. At present, I think there are more than 900 exogamous sub-clans of the Sansis in both East and West Punjab and many clans might have been left unrecorded by the author. Possibly exhaustive inquiries about the sub-clans of the Sansis have been made by the author, whose distribution in different parts of the Punjab is given below :—

SUB-CLANS OF SANSIS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THE PUNJAB

Name of the district or territory	*Names of sub-clans*
Gujranwala and Sheikhupura (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Bhanduwal, Bidowal, Budhowal, Chattha, Chhina, Datar, Ghuman, Jammun, Jandwal, Jairam, Jat, Jhanchi, Jhanji, Jogi, Kadduwal, Kang, Khokhar, Kadoo, Ladhan, Langa, Lodiwal, Malang, Maluwal, Mehra, Morad, Nanda, Pakhar, Parmanandi, Phalad, Pohu, Rahar, Ranji, Saddo, Sahjewal, Sakwal, Sakruwal, Salabi, Sandi, Sansmal, Sarwani, Sherewal, Sidhowal, Sidhu, Shahriana, Sunder, Sandrani, Uggoo or Uggi and Waraich.
Gujarat (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Awan, Chatwal, Galdike, Galaniwala, Gali, Gall, Gowala, Gund, Gundge, Halna, Harar, Hiba, Hira, Jaidev, Karthan, Khakh, Khanwal, Khokhale, Kodbaddu, Ladhan, Lakhanpal, Lange, Lodiwal, Mala, Manasan, Mata, Phalad, Ratilal, Sanarura, Sandi, Sansi, Seguwal, Seran, Sheral, Shibar, Topi and Sidhuwal or Sidhu.

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Sialkot (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Agowal, Chatwal, Chandar, Dagarwal, Dandewal, Gandowal, Ghog rwal, Gorewal, Gawala, Harar, Jaman, Jangiwal, Janowal, Jawan, Jatwal, Jatwan, Jhajju, Jodidwal, Jogiwal, Kanewan, Kadolzal, Kard, Khakh, Khanwal, Khokhle, Ladhan, Lange, Lodga, Lodhi, Lodi, Lodiwal, Logiwal, Maddipal, Madwal, Maladet, Malimal, Mananiwal, Mandar, Mani, Marualiwal, More, Marwal, Nanduwal, Narwai, Nemdiwal, Pada, Padarwal, Paddewal, Padiwal, Panduwal, Pararwal, Patti, Phan, Piddi, Puri, Raiwal, Ratanwal, Ratanwalia, Sabharwal, Sadawa, Sajhewal, Saramiwal, Saradhwal, Sarnwal, Sansi, Sansmal, Satharwal, Sekhu, Sarwanika, Shakawal, Sheranwal, Siriwal,Sohndiwal, Toriwal and Sunderwal.
Shahpur, present Sargodha (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Choghatta and Sansi.
Jehlum (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Mahi and Tor.
Rawalpindi (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Nil.
Lyallpur(West Punjab, Pakistan)	Maiya, Shamir, Bidowal, Samhandewal, Laloowal, and Sunderwal.
Montgomery (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Nil.
Peshawar (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Tanoi.
Multan (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Bhatti, Diwan and Harar.

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Jhang (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Hur, Harar, Sunderwal, Gali, Sarwani and Mehra.
Lahore (West Punjab, Pakistan)	Angri. Badelwal, Bahli, Dibtaj, Gori, Kazal, Kori, Lagia Lahniwal, Lamazi, Lamga, Legh, Lin, Lodiwal, Mahla. Majju, Majki, Motar, Mudho, Sahmsi, Sande, Sandhu, and Waddi.
Amritsar (East Punjab, India)	Arar, Aulakh, Bahli, Basra, Bath, Bharmi, Bains, Boi, Gadri, Gake, Gangwai, Ganesh, Gill, Girathu, Gori, Hail, Hans, Harar, Indra, Jawa, Jhangal, Jogwal, Jame, Khat, Lagri, Lohana, Lalbagri, Lamazi, Lamga, Langra, Madari, Mogra, Mal, Malapheru, Malke, Mandhauwal, Matus, Mattu, Mohra, Maya, Nami, Jambati, Nangre, Naru, Olki, Sahsbans, Sandhu, Sarwi, Satele, Shenha, Sud, Tanian, Tatri, Thatan, Wes and Shamir.
Gurdaspur (East Punjab, India)	Bains, Bhandari, Bhatti, Galwal, Hakim, Harar, Harchand, Harl, Harri, Jagial, Jat, Kallu, Kanzal, Karo, Khabru, Khokhar, Khushale, Kokia, Lamazi, Langrah, Lokar, Madari, Mahi, Mahla, Mes, Mitwal, Nagat, Naggi, Nagi, Nahgi, Narmi, Sadraj, Sadarpanch, Sangal, Sagi, Sahal, Sehjwi, Sajhala, Saande, Sandiwan, Saprari, Saru, Sekri Shahshmsi, Sial, Sodhi, Tagial, Terar and Wangre.
Jullundur (East Punjab, India)	Charhi, Chhawle, Dhaliwal, Harz, Jagait, Mahesh and Sandhu.
Hoshiarpur (East Punjab, India)	Chohan and Nirmala.
Ludhiana (East Punjab, India)	Sanhalke, Sidhu, Sahota, Sandhu, Mors, Majera, Chawle, Karsa, Kawar, Mahesh, Mathras and Moras.

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Ferozepur (East Punjab, India)	Dhaliwal, Gill, Gelen, Hindu, Khiali and Bambia.
Ambala (East Punjab, India)	Atal, Babrel, Bachan, Badha, Badri, Badwal, Baswan, Baghela, Bagri, Bagial, Bachi, Bebas, Bechand, Bega, Begah, Belad, Besagla, Bhali, Bharai, Bharpai, Bhawa, Bhawant, Bhore, Bhorsoo, Bhotan, Bihjar, Bali, Bande, Bangal, Bangi, Bangu, Bains, Bar, Barar, Bare, Barwal, Bashnoi, Basia, Birchand, Bola, Chakat, Chhagan, Chose, Dahu, Dantal, Deohadi, Dhagi, Dhariman, Dhia, Gola, Jhalle, Jhalli, Jhanjwan, Jodha, Kanu, Caria, Kari, Karkhal, Khawal, Khoji, Khote, Kod, Kodi, Kokti, Korwal, Mahr, Mahtal, Makian, Man, Maria, Marli, Mawan, Moda, Nagah, Nahang, Odal, Oghi, Pati, Polwal, Purne, Roewal, Rol, Sabat, Sadian, Saiban, Salukan, Sarala, Suni and Tam.
Patiala (East Punjab, India)	Badwal, Barar, Baswi, Balozed, Bhatti, Bangali, Bani, Bapli, Bansi, Beni, Bose, Gill, Goli, Gaddi, Grewal, Manes, Narwai, Nasoi, Sari and Sidhu,
Nabha (East Punjab, India)	Chhahle, Dhaliwal, Karak, Kowere, Mohia, Mohaniwal, Nainu, Ramana, Raulia, Sandhu, Sidhu and Sohi.
Faridkot and Bhatinda (East Punjab, India)	Des, Khiali, Langra and Bambia.
Simla (East Punjab, India)	Jhandi.
Jind (East Punjab, India)	Bharwal, Dhindse, Ghusar, Jhonjn, Kalyane, Khara, Mattu, Sharnapal, and Sidhu.

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Karnal (East Punjab, India)	Agarwal, Dhawan, Malia, Karjol and Dhanewal.
Rohtak (East Punjab, India)	Kanowal and Bansal.
Hissar (East Punjab, India)	Badwal and Narwai.
Gurgaon (East Punjab, India)	Chahal and Bharpai.

BEEBOWAL CLAN. The clan named 'Beebowal' needs a special note of description. This clan is found or heard of neither in the West Punjab nor in the Punjabi-speaking parts of the East Punjab. It is only found in the districts of Hissar, Karnal, Gurgaon, Rohtak, and in some villages of Jind Tahsil of Sangrur district. Some families of this clan are also found in Delhi State. This clan is not accepted by the Sansis as a true Sansi clan because the members of this clan neither belong to Mahla nor to Beehdoo, and the Sansis do not think anybody a true descendant of Sansi or Sansmal unless he or she belongs to either Mahla or Beehdoo.

Hence this Beebowal clan is an accretion of some low-caste tribe to the Sansi Community. In order to account for their clan the members of this clan have invented a romantic story. They say that Beebo was a young girl closely related to Mahla and Beehdoo. She ran away with some stranger who did not belong to the Sansi tribe. They say that the person with whom she ran away was a man of some lower caste.

The story relates that for her immoral act she was ostracised but she founded a separate clan after her own name which is called 'Beebowal'. Although this clan claims a Sansi descent and has been able to have matrimonial alliances with some Sansis, yet most of the Sansis reject their claim and treat and hate them as non-Sansis, because it is a concocted story and Beebo being a female could not have founded any clan because the Sansi society is absolutely patrilineal and patriarchal. Hence the descendants of the so-called Beebo belong to the caste of her lover who kidnapped her.

Sansi had one daughter named Raaslaan and two sons named Mahla and Beehdoo. In spite of the best efforts, the exact names of the respective sons of Mahla and Beehdoo have not

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been ascertained because the different Sansis of different clans and localities tell different names. However, they say that Harar was the eldest son of Beehdoo and Nagha was the eldest son of Mahla and mostly the Sansis of Punjab are descendants of Harar and Nagha representing Beehdoo and Mahla respectively.

At present there are many small groups of wandering tribes of Northern India who claim to be Sansis but the Sansis do not accept them and it seems to be based on certain and reasonable grounds. Some of the unsettled people of lower castes try to be absorbed by the Sansi society and they report some of the names of the sub-clans of the Sansis to which they pretend to belong whereas in reality they are accretions to the Sansi tribes. Dr. Bhargwa correctly says, "It would not be correct to say that Sansis claiming various gotras are descended from Sansmal for there must have been accretions by the recruitment of outcastes and stray persons from other tribes and castes."[1]

Kennedy[2], Naidu[3], Rose[4], Bhargwa[5] and Williams[6] have tried to give the names of the subcastes of the Sansis but they are based on an incomplete study of these people. However, Maclagan[7] has done a very exhaustive and appreciable work in this connection and he has made a very detailed study of the subclans of the Sansis of the Punjab.

STATUS OF WOMAN AND HER OUTLOOK. Woman has correctly been described as the weaker vessel. This is also true of Sansi society. Although a woman has much say in the household affairs, yet the Sansis think her to be lower than, and inferior to man. In some of the districts of the Punjab, the old ideas of her being unclean, impure and polluted persist. The peculiar characteristic of Sansi woman is that she does not want any change for the better and she wants to cling obstinately to the old modes, rites, customs and ways of life. This tendency of backward women is very apparent in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar. If the woman of a community had old-fashioned ideas, then it is very difficult to reclaim and improve it as the initial instructions, behaviour and habits of mother are the cradle of mankind.

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1. Bhargwa, B. S., *The Criminal Tribes of India*, p. 17.
2. Kennedy, M., *Criminal Classes*, p. 245.
3. Naidu, Pauparao, *The Criminal Tribes of India*, Book III, p. 24.
4. Rose, H. A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, p. 363.
5. Bhargwa, B. S., *The Criminal Tribes of India*, p. 17.
6. Rose, A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, p. 365.
7. Maclagan, E. D., *Census Report of India*, 1891, Vol. XXI, Part iii.

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Fifty years ago Rose truly observed, "Sansis are much under the influence of their aged women and the traditions cherished by them are a great obstacle to the reclamation of the tribe."[1] This observation of Rose has undoubtedly changed to a great extend but still its proof is found in the Sansi women. As a matter of fact the Indian women in particular and the women all over the world in general are more whimsical than men. Education is the greatest weapon to dispel ignorance and superstition as it widens and enlightens the outlook. But the female education of Sansis is in a very deplorable condition. There are only four or five exclusive habitations of the Sansis in the Punjab and Delhi. Deeda, a small hamlet of about 33 families of Sansis, situated near Dina Nagar in the district of Gurdaspur was thoroughly studied by this author. In this village some boys are studying and one of them is a college student also. But the girls know nothing more than simple household duties and the grazing of pigs and cattle. With the increase of education the status of the Sansi woman is expected to improve and already she has occupied a proper place like her sisters of other advanced communities of the Punjab. However, it cannot be ignored that the status of women in the Sansi society of the district of Gurdaspur and Amritsar is very deplorable.

In comparison with the orthodox Hindu society of the past the Sansi woman has always been held in great respect than the Hindu woman. She can listen to and even sit in the sessions of Tribal Panchayat. There have been instances of Sansi women who had been acting as panchas of their Tribal Panchayat for deciding their community disputes, and as a matter of fact the Sansi panchayat system was founded by a woman named Raaslaan who was the sister of Mahla and Beedhoo and the daughter of Raja Sansmal. In the past, according to the customary law of the Punjab, a Hindu woman (the Sikhs included) could not inherit the property of her parents or husband as only a male could become the legitimate heir of some property. But since centuries the Sansi woman has been at advantage to have a right of becoming heiress of the property of her father or of her husband as sanctioned by the Sansi society.

RECREATIONAL LIFE OF SANSIS. The Sansis are proverbially and tempermentally a free, frolicsome, jocular and jovial people. A large number of writers has described them as bards and genealogists. Both these appellations demand an exceptional power

1. Rose, H. A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, p. 366.

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of memory, intelligence, wit, resourcefulness and originality. They possess all these god-given gifts. It is important to note that the Sansis of the Punjab have no separate songs and folklore of their own. Both the sexes sing and enjoy the Punjabi songs and folklore as they do not have any separate, regular and systematised language. Their own private dialect is just a distortion of the Punjabi language.

So far as the speciality of the Sansis as bards is concerned, the Sansis of West Punjab have an exclusive mastery and proclivity to sing *dholas*. *Dhola* is a very prominent folk-song of the Punjab and Rajasthan. Some Sansis compose *dholas* on the momentous events of the life of great men and sing them to the Jats. The *dholas* are sung on different themes--religious, romantic, humorous and chivalrous. The *dholas* are also a great economic means of some Sansis of the West Punjab. Some of the *dholas* sung by the Sansis are given in a separate chapter to show their variety and specimens.

The Sansis are extraordinarily agile and athletic in their habits. The women are very good singers of folk songs which they enjoy at the time of marriages and other joyous functions. They are not singers like Bazigar women or like those of other vagrant tribes. The singing and recitals of the Sansi women are confined to the functions celebrated within their own community.

The males are particularly fond of outdoor games. Rose and Williams are in accord regarding the opinion, "The physique of the race is exceptional and the men are possessed of phenomenal power of endurance and insensibility to fatigue."[1] So the Sansis are by nature athletes. They are especially fond of races, jumps and *kabaddi*. They hold running and jumping competitions at their social functions and the relatives give prizes to the winners. Some of the Sansi youth have taken to wrestling, but none is of outstanding merit. They are best in athletics.

At marriages when the Sansis gather in large numbers, the women sing folk-songs to the accompaniment of *dholak*, a platter or a pitcher. The pitcher is played on with a desi shoe and the rhythmical tick-tick of beating of a *rora* or a small brick-bat. One or two women lead, while the other women follow them in chorus. They sing all the ceremonial songs of Punjabi folklore, but they are particularly interested in *mahia* and *balo* or *tappas*. They sing *tappas* in very masterly way. The young boys also sing *tappas* in

1. Ibid., p. 369.

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a melodious and sweet voice.

The men deserve a special mention regarding their recreation of music. Like other Punjabis, the well-to-do Sansis engage professional singers and buffoons to entertain them with their songs and mimicry. A band is also engaged for such occasions. A peculiar feature of a Sansi marriage is that they engage a drum-beater who is paid for his services at marriages and other auspicious functions. He beats his drum as loud as he can and thus they exhibit that there is a marriage in a certain house. The most worth-seeing scene of Sansi recreation is when they perform Bhangra dance in a circle round the drum-beater moving rhythmically and giving motions to their legs, feet, eyes, heads, shoulders and neck in tune with every beat of the drum.

In rhythm, they give a beat of foot on the ground, clapping their hands and raising them above their heads. Sometimes they sing *bolis* and *tappas*. Sometimes they perform the Bhangra dance in different age-wise groups and sometimes all the boys, young and old, join together. They give money to the drum-beater, waving coins round the heads of the dancers.

Besides this, another type of jocularity is exhibited by mute jokes, jests and jeerings. Water is thrown at one-another. Coloured water is sprinkled on clothes and pinches and twitches are given to the persons in jocking. In this respect the females do not lag behind and they joke at their male relatives. But one outcome is inevitable. There is hardly any auspicious function and particularly marriage when some disputes and fights do not take place due to one cause or the other. They do fall out and the sticks and clubs are invariably used between rival parties. After breaking one another's head, they cool down their anger and within an hour all of them assemble in the tribal panchyat, where the panches take their fees and decide disputes of the parties. The penalties are exacted from the culprits and given to the sufferers on the spot. A large amount of money thus realized from the disputing parties is wasted on drinks and entertainments. One can psychologically conclude that this expression of aggressive nature is a part of their recreational life as their martial instinct awakens even on such occasions.

The Sansis are particularly fond of going to see fairs. Now they also go to listen to the messages of the great leaders of India. When their pockets allow them and they happen to be in or near the cities, they see pictures, theatres, wrestling bouts and circuses like other people. Very many of them play cards, chess,

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barakatal, etc. Some of them indulge in gambling and bring bad name and unbearable trouble to their families.

The Sansis of West Punjab have a singular monopoly of reciting the Punjabi folk-song *dholas* at which they are adept. Now the welfare department of the Punjab Government is proposing to do something substantial for the settlement of the Denotified tribes and the Sansis will also be benefited by the scheme of the Government. This scheme of the Government can be understood from the following words, "this scheme has been included in the Second Five Year Plan on the advice of the Planning Commission and has proved very useful. In these centres the children are taught songs, cultivation of right habits, etc. Women are taught sewing, cooking, mending of clothes, care of the baby and also some crafts. Men are offered chances of discussion, indoor and outdoor games, and adult education. A small library and reading room is attached to each centre."[1] It is a laudable programme and if carried out in a missionary spirit, it will give a great impetus to the social improvement of these people.

The educated and well-to-do Sansis have radio sets, harmoniums, gramophones, etc. Like the rest of the Punjabis the Sansis are very romantic people. The young girls make great fun at the time of marriages when they perform Gidha dance which is a common heritage of Punjabi culture. In the month of Sawan the Sansi girls enjoy the burials and cremations of "guddi-gudda" (female and male dolls) which is also a common practice of all the Punjabi girls all over the Punjab. They enjoy swings *(jhulas or peenghs)* during the festival of Tian just like other Punjabi girls. Finally we may say that the Sansis know well how to break the chain of monotony, dullness and drudgery, and their recreational life is very interesting.

SOCIAL GROUPS AND THEIR CONFLICT. Although the Sansis have a very deep-rooted community feeling as a whole, yet they have got different social groups within the community which have mutual conflict and jealousy. They have got two types of conflict—internal and external. From a sociological point of view their internal social conflict of different groups is more important. They have the following social groups within their community.

The Sansis of sub-montane tracts of Punjab call the other Sansis of the plains Punjabis, and the 'Punjabis' in turn call them

1. Report of the Work done by the Department of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes, Punjab, during 1956-57 and 1957-58, p. 4.

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'Paharis'. They do interdine, as they do in the whole of the Punjab because there is no restriction of interdining among the different social groups of Sansis. But the Punjabis and Paharis seldom inter-marry. The old and reactionary people still cling to their social mores. This social narrow-mindedness is particularly prominent among the Sansis of Amritsar and Gurdaspur.

The Sansis of Hariana (Karnal, Rohtak, Hissar and Gurgaon), Doaba (Jullundur and Hoshiarpur) and the former Punjab States are confined to their respective areas in the question of inter-marriages.

Recently, two more social groups have emerged in the Sansi society—the progressive and educated element and the old and conservative panches and their supporters. There are more shortcomings in the tribal panchayat of Sansis than good points. The educated and progressive people want to get rid of the parasite panches, but the panches impose themselves on them. So a tussle is going on between the liberals and the conservatives. Many differences have appeared between these two groups and it seems to be certain that after a decade or so the parasite panches will disappear.

In the Sansis of Mahja two other social groups are found—Kothianwale and Dooje (others). The Kothianwale are those whose women can climb on the roofs of their houses and Dooje are those who have a strict taboo in this matter and any violation is punished by heavy fines or by ex-communication. Except for the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur, the Sansis of the whole of the Punjab do not observe this custom. So the Sansis of these two districts are strictly confirmed in matrimonial matters to the area of Mahja (Amritsar and Gurdaspur) as they do not have matrimonial relations with the Sansis whose females are allowed to climb on the roofs of their houses. Now some of the agitated Sansis are trying their best to shatter this social limitation as will be described in the Sansi panchayat system.

The Sansis as a community have a very deep-rooted separatist tendency from other communities. They give their code name 'rete' or 'khete' or 'kajje', to other people and especially to the Jats. Even in the course of quarrelling and brawling they suddenly maintain silence at the words "bai koolo" (be quiet). They do not want to have other people join their social functions and attend their tribal panchayat. Now this separatist tendency is decreasing but still it is found in Mahja.

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The Sansi Panchayat System

Origin. The Sansis call their panchayat Raas. The term 'raas' connotes its origin as it has already been related. Raja Sansmal had two sons—Mahla and Beehdoo. Beehdoo used to graze cattle in the jungle. One day he saw a branch of a tree, which he decided to cut for making a stick for him. But at that time he did not possess an axe or a hatchet. So he postponed the cutting to the next day. In the evening he took his herd home and told his brother Mahla that on such and such tree he had seen a good branch which he wanted to cut the next day. Mahla proved to be very greedy and dishonest. At night when Beehdoo was asleep, Mahla went and cut the branch found by Beehdoo, but he did not disclose his misdeed to his brother. Next day Beehdoo took an axe and went to cut the branch and found that it had already been removed by somebody else. He knew that he had not told anybody else but Mahla. Afterwards, he found the stick made of the very branch in the hands of Mahla, and a bitter quarrel arose between them. In his resentment Beehdoo cut off his relations with his brother and ex-communicated him saying, "You are neither a brother nor a true Sansi. The Sansis never behave like this, but you have breached the mutual trust just for the sake of a *chhari* (stick). So you are a 'chhari' (a man related to *chhari* or stick) and you have no relation with me or with other Sansis."

On this ostricisation of Mahla, the Sansis were divided into two groups– followers and supporters of Beehdoo and those of Mahla. The followers of Beehdoo were considered to be the real and superior Sansis and the followers of Mahla were considered to be of lower status being called Chhahris. Inter-marriages between the two groups were objected to. Some time passed in this rift. They had a very wise and influential elder sister named Raaslaan. She could not tolerate the widening gulf between her two brothers and their respective groups of followers, which she thought would ultimately destroy the tribe, because the mutual differences were swelling to feuds and fights. At last she called both the parties. A huge assemblage of Sansis rallied round her. She interceded with them and after a proper and just consideration of the matter, she imposed a penalty on the defaulting brother Mahla who paid the same to his brother Beehdoo for his breach of trust and obtained a pardon. After this both the brothers and their followers were reunited. From that day onward the

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tribal panchayat of Sansis has been called 'Raas' as it was founded by Raaslaan.

Here an interesting point arises. Although the Chhahris were condoned yet the word Chhahri has gained a perpetual existence in the Sansi society. Any tribe or caste which is not Sansi but claims to be Sansi is called Chhahri and no Sansi can inter-marry with a Chhahri ; and if ever he does, he is ex-communicated.

The penalty to be paid by the Sansis is called 'tak'. A 'tak' means a cut. It is commonly found in literature that the guilty and culprits were punished with mutilations and amputations of their noses, ears, hands and feet, etc. The word 'tak' signifies cutting some part of the body as a punishment to the defaulter. After some time when society became more civilised, the punishment of 'tak' was replaced by other forms to punishment. A payment in cash or kind was one of them. Many contemporary writers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh have written that he never imposed the death sentence on anybody but he commonly used to give the punishment of mutilation. This system of punishment resorted to by Maharaja Ranjit Singh entirely corresponded to his Sansi ancestors' 'tak' or a cut. With the passage of time the Raas developed into a regular system on a firm basis. The Sansis generally do not sue each other in the civil courts, but they bring all types of cases before the tribal panchayat.

The panchayat consists of some panches who are hereditary or are acknowledged by the 'bradri'. Every clan or a sub-caste has its own panch, who is a type of leader of his clan. The petty disputes can be settled by the clan panchayat alone, but more important problems are decided by a jury of more panches. There are cases when Sansis get their disputes decided by the panches of other allied tribes and the cases of other tribes have also been coming to the Sansi panches. The disputants are called *mudais* (clients). The clients engage their panches as they choose. Both the parties have an equal number of panches. Panches listen to the complaints and then somehow arrive at an unanimous decision. The persons who present the cases and plead and fight for them are called *charawas*. They are meant only for their own clients just like the lawyers who are engaged on fees.

Initiating a Jhagra. Any tribal or mutual dispute of the Sansis is called *jhagra*. The tribal panchayat is a supreme authority and it can settle a dispute from a debt of a single pice to the heinous commission of a murder. The *jhagra* is initiated in a very simple

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and humble way. When some Sansis have gathered at some function or occasion, the person who wants to lodge a complaint against somebody else, gives a rupee to a panch. Once even the offer of a single pice by a poor man was sufficient to initiate a *jhagra* to give him justice, but now a *jhagra* cannot be initiated without the deposit of one rupee with a panch. This rupee is called *dho*. Literally *dho* means to face each other or to meet face to face (*dhukna*). The appellant names his opponent and states his complaints. Then the rupee of a *dho* is also taken from the accused. Then both of them have got to deposit *girvi* whose amount varies according to the gravity of the case in the estimation of the panches. Although the *girvis* are refundable, yet no *jhagra* can begin without the deposit of *girvi*. After this the date for the beginning of *jhagra* is fixed. The *charawas* are engaged by the litigants.

After these preliminaries are over, the following interdictions are strictly imposed on both the parties and on all other persons who are present in the *jhagra* :—

1. Nobody can carry any weapon, arm or stick with him or her.
2. Anybody who enters the area of *raas* must sit on the ground, putting off his shoes as none can enter the court of Raja Sansmal without paying proper respect to it. The shoes must not touch the *phoohri* or the mat used in the areas.
3. The expenses incurred on entertainment of all the persons who are present at a *jhagra* are borne by the litigants. So the *kharcha* is taken from them in advance and has to be deposited with the panches.
4. The opponents must not interrupt each other's statements while one is giving his facts.
5. The opponents cannot go to each other's *phoohri*.
6. The *charawas* of opposite parties must not meet each other or talk to each other in any way or at any time during the proceedings of *jhagra* so that there may not be any collusion between them.
7. If both the opponents or any one of them is dissatisfied with the decision or partiality of the panches, he can transfer his case to another panchayat or panches, from whom he hopes to attain justice.
8. A woman can also hear a *jhagra*, and if she is wise, well respected and of high character, she can act as a panch also.

The seating or squatting of the persons present in the *jhagra* is done in a definite system whereby the panches face each other

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while sitting and the opponents also face their opponents. At the beginning of a *jhagra*, the first chance of making a statement (*sair*) is always given to the client or the person who takes the initiative to have a *(jhagra)* with his antagonist. With every allegation which a person makes against his rival, the panches tie one pebble, a small piece of broken pot, etc. called *teti*, in a cloth. At the end of his *sair* the *tetis* thus tied are counted to see if they are equal to the number of his charges. At every complaint lodged by the *charawas* of the client, the panches cross-question them and try to discover the truth. The accused and his *charawas* cannot utter a single word, but keep listening to and remembering the notable points of the rivals to be discussed, which they will refute when their turn comes to give their statement. The actual prolongation of the period of *jhagra* is carried out by the discussion between the *charawas* and the panches. The client can himself debate a point, if he can or wants to do it. In the course of discussion some of the invalid charges or claims called *tappas* are rejected, then and there. If the *kharcha* is exhausted owing to prolongation of the *jhagra*, the date of *jhagra* is postponed.

If once some panches have decided a *jhagra* but have imposed an unfair penalty, the aggrieved person can rebegin his *jhagra* before some other panches and panchyat by *paarkh* which means an appeal to the *paarkhoes*, panches or judges. If the new panchayat decides in his favour and reduced the penalty or punishment, the excessive charges realised from him can be refunded to him. The Sansis can take their *jhagra* for decision to the prominent panches of some other tribes. For example, in the Punjab forty or fifty years ago, Aaroo, a Barar by caste, was resorted to as a panch for settling disputes of different tribes and some Sansis also sought his decision. Aaroo was a native of Lahore.

In the past the Sansi panches, though illiterate, used to be very witty, intelligent, honest, resourceful and just. They could feel the real pulse of *tappas* or charges, and could decide accordingly. As an illustration an interesting example may be quoted below :—

About 120 years ago there lived in the village of Isharke, district Sheikhupura, a famous Sansi punch named Shaam. His sense of justice, wisdom and wit was acknowledged by many tribes of the Punjab. Once a very peculiar *jhagra* came to him, which he decided in a masterly way. There was a Bhedkut (a sub-caste of Sansis) and his daughter-in-law was very loose in her morals. They tried to improve her but she grew from bad to worse day to day. So the Bhedkut and his son decided to get rid of her and dispose her

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to her parents, which could be done only by a decision of the panches because her parents had to return her price to her father-in-law, before taking her back. He submitted his *jhagra* to many tribal panchayats. The *jhagra* went on for many days but at the end the panches imposed a heavy penalty on that woman to be paid by her parents. But her father-in-law always rejected the decision and withdrew his *jhagra*. With *paarkh*, he kept putting his case before several panchayats but without getting the decision which he aimed at. At last that *jhagra* came to Shaam. He listened to the misdeeds of that woman very carefully. After due consideration, he inferred that the previous panches had been assessing her price as a woman, which she actually did not deserve being an immoral person. So Shaam thought that such a bad woman could have no value or price. With this view, he imposed a *tak* of two *dhelas* (one pice) and paid from his own pocket saying, 'This woman is not even worth a single pice. So the parents of this woman could have paid one pice to her father-in-law to get her back.' The old Sansis who saw this *jhagra* with their own eyes used to tell that Bhedkut, the father-in-law of that woman, danced with joy saying, "Yes, this is the real price of this woman and I agree to take it. The panches who had been deciding this case previously were mistaken to evaluate her just as a woman which she is not in her morals. Hence she only deserves this price of two *dhelas*."

A decisive argument, interesting, appealing and irrefutable like that of above case is called *badal* by the Sansis. Sometimes it is the *badals* which reject or accept individual charges of the disputants. Sometimes even a single *badal* of a wise panch can decide a *jhagra* of very prolonged standing.

Binda. When the panches find it difficult to find truth with the arguments, they resort to *binda*. A *binda* is an ordeal by water or sometimes by fire, the two gods which the Sansis fear most. The Sansis think it to be very serious, sacred and solemn, to decide their disputes by *binda*. Just at the word *binda*, a Sansi will confess his fault rather than undergoing the actual trial. The custom of *binda* seems to be as old as the Vedas and the Aryans of ancient times used to decide their disputes by this trial. We read, 'If both the accuser and accused are condemned to undergo the ordeal they must both undergo the water at the same time and he who first emerges to the surface to breathe is considered guilty.[1]

In support of the ancient Hindu origin of *binda*, we can adduce

1. Dubois, Abbe J. A., *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, p. 722.

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also another authority, "Yet even of late years, English rustics have been known to duck some wretched old woman supposed to be a witch, little knowing that they were keeping up the ancient water ordeal, where the sacred element rejects the wrong and accepts the right, so that the guilty floats and the innocent sinks ... or judicial rite which forms the part of the old Hindu law-book of Manu, and which in English law, till the beginning of the thirteenth century, was a legal means of trying those accused of murder and robbery."[1]

How is *binda* performed ? The litigants are asked to deposit their fresh *dho*. Each disputant is asked to select his *toba* (diver) and the day and place of *binda* are fixed. The following conditions are imposed on the diver :—

1. He should keep his ideas pure and should not have sexual intercourse during his confinement for *binda*.
2. His wife should not be pregnant as it makes him impure for the sacred performance of *binda*.

At the time of fixing the date of *binda*, again the panches give warning to the rivals to avoid *binda* and confess the fault. The divers are confined to separate rooms or places, three days before the date of *binda*, after their respective clients take them to their houses. They remain in this strict seclusion and cannot see any person during the internment. They keep a long veil of thick cloth round face and eyes.

Another person is appointed to remain with the *toba* to serve him and do the necessary tasks like making arrangements for his food, taking him out for easing as the *toba* is not allowed to raise his veil from his face. This assistant is called 'Brahman'. This tradition proves that once the Brahmans used to be the functionaries of the Sansis. On the day of the *binda* both the parties take their divers to the rendezvous, on the bank of the pond having at least chest-deep water in it. The divers are still kept in the veils and they are supported and guided by their respective Brahmans, as nobody else can see or touch them. Here again the panches make an attempt to prevent the antagonists from undergoing the trial of *binda*. Then two long wooden poles are fixed in the water at a distance of 8 to 10 yards from each other. The *tobas* are led by the Brahmans to their respective poles fixed in water. Then the *tobas* get hold of their poles, invoking God, gods, goddesses and their ancestral deities. The panches first address the *laagoo (mudai* client who initiates

1. Tylor, E. B., *Anthropology*, Vol. II, pp. 149 and 150.

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the *jhagra*). He is asked to throw a piece (*rori*) of gur in water of the pond over and beyond the head of his *toba*, and he does this. Then the *bhaagoo* (the accused) does the same. If anybody's piece of gur breaks in the air, when thrown, the thrower is suspected to be guilty but the final judgment is to be obtained from the actual trial. Then the *tobas* are ordered to dive into the water simultaneously. Each of the *toba* gets a stronghold on his pole and tries his best to remain submerged in the water as long as possible. The one who comes out of the water first, is judged to be false and his client is penalised as decided before diving. The penalty or *tak* has to be paid by the guilty person in the form of money, cattle, grain, ornaments or even by service. Although the *binda* is the final resort in a Sansi dispute, yet by *paarkh*, the previous *binda* is revoked and if the parties wish, they can again decide their issue by the *binda* trial. After realising the penalty and deciding the disputes, the Sansis offer *gur* in the names of their ancestors, and put an end to the issue. This is known as *gur tapana* which also is used at the time of ex-communicating a person or at the time of breaking one's relation with somebody else.

Powers of Panchayat

The tribal panchayat is the greatest force to control the Sansis. It is the tribal panchayat which sanctions or controls the social activities of its members. Some of the important sanctions and controls of Sansi panchayat are given below :—

1. The rules of endogamy and exogamy are strictly enforced by the authority of the panchayat.
2. Within their tribe, the Sansis are very strict and honest in fulfilment of their commitments. No Sansi can go back on his formal betrothal, and if either of the party violates it, a heavy penalty is imposed.
3. A widow cannot remarry without the consent of her previous in-laws.
4. The parents of widow cannot marry her anywhere else provided they pay a ransom to her previous in-laws, as decided by the panchayat.
5. A female can become the heiress of the property of her father.
6. No Sansi can take from or give his daughter in marriage to any other person than a Sansi, keeping in view the rules of exogamy of the clans.
7. No Sansi can encroach upon the earnings of the village of

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another Sansi which are in his hereditary jurisdiction, nor can be hunt there without his consent.

8. If indebted, a Sansi has got to pay back his debt to the creditor Sansi. Otherwise he is ex-communicated or penalised.
9. The wrongs done to each other, by magic and witchcraft, are also judged and penalised by the panchayat.
10. If a Sansi deposes another Sansi criminal or sides with the police and does harm to him, he is severely dealt with by the panchayat. The act of informing police against a Sansi is called by them *koohna.*
11. All the Sansis in an expedition must get equal shares of booty without regard to position, age or courage. A *soohia* or the informer of a profitable situation in an expedition also gets a full share of the booty.
12. A person who disobeys the decrees of the panchayat is outcast and is re-admitted to the community after paying heavy penalty and undergoing various indignities.
13. If a Sansi is killed in an expedition, his comrades must compensate his loss to his widow and children.
14. In the case of violating social customs, the Sansi panchayat ex-communicates the guilty person.
15. Any woman who abuses an elderly person or her husband is ex-communicated and penalised.
16. If the brothers of a person do not give a proper and equal share to him from the property of parents they are socially compelled by the panchayat to do so.
17. In some parts of the Punjab a regional endogamy is also observed. The people who inter-marry outside their region are ex-communicated and fined.
18. If a Sansi takes food from a Choohra, Mazahbi, Chamar or other lower castes, he is outcast and fined.
19. If, in the mutual fight of Sansis, somebody's limb is cut, the panchayat takes the necessary action for compensating the aggrieved person.
20. If a Sansi is in collusion with the Jats, the police or some other people against his own community, he is punished.
21. A son or a daughter can be adopted by the consent of the relatives and the panchayat, and they can inherit the property of adopted parents.
22. Common moral laxities—rape, fornication, concubinage, companionate, adultery, kidnapping and elopement—are very severely punished. The most serious vice and sin in Sansi

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society is incest. They call it *kuchaari*. If one commits sexual intercourse with a person who is higher or lower than his or her kinship, the guilty person is ex-communicated for ever. In the past there were some cases in Sansi society, of incest, in which the ears, or the nose of the guilty persons were cut off and they were treated with contempt. They blacken their faces, put garlands of old shoes round their necks and parade them before the public on a donkey. The Sansi tribal panchayat had a great controlling authority in the past but it has lost its prestige because of many abuses that have crept in to it.

Deterioration of Sansi Panchayat

Human society cannot remain stagnant. It changes with time. The old tribal panchayat system of Sansis served a real need of the time and the panches used to be just and honest. They remained in nomadic mode of life for some centuries and under such conditions the Sansis were not in touch with the civil system of the State. They were strangers to society and it was in turn strange to them. In the British regime, the Criminal Tribes Act kept the Sansi panchayat system intact. The foreign rulers never seriously tried to assimilate and absorb these people in the general set-up of society. A Sansi used to be under the authority of the police and that of the village lambardar. The District Magistrate was the highest authority known to him as it was he who could make or mar his life. The members of the criminal tribes could not appeal to the law of the land for a redress of their grievances. One is grieved to read, "This registration is usually effected on the recommendation of the police. The name of any person thus registered cannot be removed except by or under the order of the District Magistrate against such entry, but cannot get any relief in any court of law."[1] So the Sansis were registered as criminals and did not have the benefit of the civil law of the land. So they had no other course than to decide their communal disputes among themselves, through the tribal panchayat. So the Criminal Tribes Act became one of the most cogent causes for the perpetuation and development of the Sansi tribal panchayat system.

After independence, with the spread of education and the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, the Sansis have begun to get rid of their panches who are hopelessly dishonest and idle and

1. Raghaviah, V., *Problems of Criminal Tribes*, p. 7.

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parasitically suck the blood of Sansi society. The enlightened members of the Sansi community are up to abolish the tribal panchayat system and even in keeping it, they want its complete re-orientation and the idea for re-orientation is also supported by Dr. Bhargwa : "At the same time it will also be necessary to re-organise the panchayat system, on sound and scientific lines, so that it may prove a source of reformation and uplift rather than corruption and deterioration."[1]

Today in the Punjab, there are two main parties of the Sansis : (i) Anti-panches and (ii) Pro-panches. The first group consists of social workers, educated persons and other progressive elements, while the second group comprises the panches themselves and their supporters. Another reason is that the Sansis are now full-fledged and respectable citizens of India. They can seek justice in any law court. The village panchayat system is organised by the State Government and in some villages we also find the Sansi members of village panchayats. On the other hand when they see the blackmailing of their tribal panches, they hate and shun them. After studying the Sansi panchayat of different parts of Punjab one finds that the greatest blackmailing in the Punjab is done in the Sansi panchayat of Majha. So a tug-of-war is going on between the groups of panches and the progressive elements of this community. The panches do not want to part with their authority, privileges and social dignity, whereas the social workers, the Central and State Governments and educated persons of this community want to improve all the backward and handicapped communities in all respects of life. But it is not possible without doing away with the regressive, whimsical and unjust tribal panchayat.

Social Evils of Sansi Panchayats of Gurdaspur and Amritsar

Although the panches rule over the Sansi tribe throughout Punjab, yet in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar their hold is the strongest. Some of their malpractices are described below :—

1. *Kotha* (climbing on the roof of a house). The panches of districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar have their own Government absolutely opposed to the Indian Constitution, with despotic powers over the Sansis. No female can climb on the roof of her house, whatever the position, conditions and needs be. If, in some family, some women infringe this rule, the family is ostracised and

1. Bhargwa, B. S., *The Criminal Tribes of India*, p. 111.

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is pardoned only when a heavy fine is exacted from them which is wasted by the panches in frolicity.

If a family, which has a woman who has climbed on the roof of her house and has paid no penitence penalty to the panches, happens to deal with or interdine with others, in a happy, mournful or ordinary dealings and ceremonies, the host is also boycotted.

2. *Dress Penalties.* The panches have their own ways and the government is unaware of their doings as all is hidden in their code term *(bai koolo)* or panchayat raj. Panchayati raj is no doubt a blessing to them, but only when a panchayat leads the people to a better state. But a panchayat should be dissolved and replaced by another, when it misleads, exploits and oppresses the people, encourages social evils and crimes for its own ends. In the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar there are panches who impose fines or ostracise people for wearing certain clothes like shalwar, sweater and smart footwear, etc.

3. *Khooh da tak* (penalty for drawing water from a well by a female). Nobody's wife can draw water even from the well of her family, even if it be within the compound of her own house. Nobody's wife can also bathe at a well or under the tap of a hand-water-pump. If any female commits this fault, the whole of the family is broken with whole of the tribe. There are many people who have suffered ex-communication and a penalty for the use of well by the females.

The imposition of penalties by private groups and the use of threats and fictitious authority are punishable under section 429 of Indian Penal Code. Legally this is extortion too, which is punishable under section 383 of Indian Penal Code, but still the law does not take any notice of Sansi panches.

4. *Selling of Women.* This is the blackest spot on society. This evil practice is found in all communities. In the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar, there are many examples of trading in women.

5. *Restriction on Professions.* Nobody can take up a profession as he chooses or likes. All is to be in tune with the wishes of the panches. The Indian Government is straining its every nerve to rebuild India, and its specialists are probing into the problems of Indian people. A separate sum of money has been earmarked for the depressed classes and De-notified tribes. But all the efforts are in vain because of the panches of the tribe. State programme is up to impart technical and practical education to the Indians. Hence handicrafts and arts are being taught even in the basic primary

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schools. Technical education is also being given in factories and workshops so that they may earn their livelihood independently and honourably. But the Sansis of Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts cannot adopt the professions of weaving, carpentry and shoe-making, etc. as the Sansi panches have attached impurity and degradation to these professions. Therefore, it is the panches who are nullifying the welfare programme of the Government and unless these panches are handled legally nothing can be achieved in the right direction.

6. *Gotaknala.* This means dining by the related women of the same subcaste in the same vessel. (*Gote*—subcaste, *Nivala*—morsel of food.) This is a very common custom among all the people of the Punjab. It is conducted when the bride meets the females of her in-laws for the first time. The panches of Sansi tribe observe it with an inflexible rigidity. This is a very costly custom involving the expenditure of ghee and sugar or *shakar*. If some poor people are not able to perform it, they are boycotted. Nobody accepts the relations of sons and daughters of such a couple. The sons and daughters of such a couple have to pay a penalty to perform the ceremony of *gotaknala* even after the death of their parents, if they want to live in the tribe.

7. *Preservations and Perpetuation of Untouchability.* Under the Constitution of India, untouchability has been held to be a crime and anybody contempting anybody else on the creed of caste and colour is called to the book. All this is being done to break down obnoxious social barriers. The panches have their sense of superiority and they do not allow the Sansis to take food from so-called low castes and untouchables of the land. If a Sansi eats with a Christian, a Balmiki and Mazhbi Singh, whom they call *churhas*, the panches impose a fine of Rs. 60 on him.

In order to stop this evil, the panches should be dealt with "East Punjab Removal of Religious and Social Disabilities Act No. 16 of 1948, section 11.

8. *Auladunjanj.* (A marriage party along with the *aulad* or offspring of the participators). This is also prevalent only in the Sansi tribe of Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts. According to the *raas* of the panches, along with a marriage party, the relations of the host go along with their families, even with their donkeys and dogs. The marriage party stays in the house of bride's parents, sometimes for fifteen days. That adds to the poverty of the parents of the bride as well as to that of the bridegroom. If somebody happens to take a trunk or a suit-case with the marriage party, he

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or she is fined by the panches.

9. *Tind*, *balhni* and *siran*. The parents of the bride and the bridegroom are forced to distribute the *tind* or *balhni* (a small pitcher) full of ghee and *sugar* among all the relatives and serve sumptuous meals during their stay for the marriage ceremony. The word *sir* signifies a single share of a married couple. The *tind* or *balhni* generally comprises *panjsera* or *satsera* (5 or 7 seers), half *ghee* and half sugar. If a father has five married sons, he will get five for them and one as his own share. This means giving out hundreds of rupees to one related family as the *tind* and *balhni* can be given in kind as well as in money. Besides the extravagant expenditure on marriage, thousands of rupees are wasted in the ceremony of *tind* and *balhni*. Thus the idle and ease-loving Sansi people get into heavy debt ; criminal activities, theft, moral vagaries and vagabond habits besiege them.

After studying the present deterioration of the Sansi panchayat one reaches the definite conclusion that the tribal Sansi panchayat must be abolished immediately as it abuses its powers. The tribal panchayat of these people is only a source and breeding place of their social evils. The Sansi panches, and especially those of Majha, are doing a great harm to the progress of Sansi society. In short no reformation of these people is possible unless their tribal panchayat is legally abolished by the Government.

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CHAPTER TEN

SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

"Men commonly think according to their inclinations, speak according to their learning and imbibed opinions, but generally act according to custom."

—BACON.

WE WILL NOW STUDY the main social customs of the life-cycle of the Sansis. These customs are connected with birth, betrothal, marriage and death. They, in general, are the main and important events in the life of a man and so will be discussed as they are performed in the Sansi society. Before taking up these customs, we should study briefly the Sansi family from which and for which all these social customs come into being. Marriage rites and death ceremonies will be described in separate chapters.

SANSI FAMILY

A Sansi family, as a rule, is patriarchal and the father dominates family life. The mother of the children is dependent and she is submissive to her husband. It is the husband who, being at their helm, decides the household affairs.

All the social groups and sections of the Sansis have a family nomenclature of the paternal line as Sansi family is always patrilineal. The very word 'Sansi' is derived from Sansmal or Sansi, the ancestor of the tribe. Similarly the main 23 *gotes* are named after the names of their 23 ancestors who were sons of Mahla and Beehdoo.

The Sansi family is as a rule patrilocal. After marriage the bridegroom lives in his paternal place whereas the bride has to leave her parents to live with her husband. We find rarely a matrilocal family in which case the husband has to leave his parents and live with his wife in the village of her parents. In this case, the husband is called *ghar jawai*. It has also been observed that at present the Sansi youth are making their independent families. After marriage the couple sets up its

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separate household anywhere according to its liking. The independent families are increasing day by day.

The new bride and her mother-in-law *(nohn-te-sas)* do not pull on together for a long time. As a result, separation of families takes place soon after the performance of marriage. Still, in joint families, the patrilocal families are more common than matrilocal and independent families.

Family at Home

Generally, a Sansi family lives under the same roof or in the same house consisting of husband, wife, their children and the parents and the unmarried sisters and brothers of the husband. The housing condition of the Sansis is far from satisfactory. The joint family system is prevalent among them. Therefore, their accommodation is usually congested as most of the houses consist of more households. According to the Census Report of 1951, "House is a structure while 'household' is a human group. A house means a dwelling with a separate main entrance, a household means all persons who live together in the same house and have a common mess." So a house determines dwelling and a hearth for taking food from a certain hearth. Now some Sansi families have *pacca* houses. The *pacca* houses are increasing with the betterment of economic conditions of the Sansis, and their accommodation problem is reducing because the new houses consist of more rooms. The author studied 40 houses of the Sansis of different villages of the Punjab and the results of the study are given below:

Total number of houses	—	40
Total number of hearths	—	50
Total number of families	—	55
Total number of rooms	—	70
Total number of inmates	—	350
Number of inmates per room	—	5
Number of persons per hearth	—	7
Number of persons per house	—	8.75

Fundamentally, it is the mothers who are the moulders of a nation; it is they who stamp the children with their personality, habits and behaviour. The Sansi mothers are full of filial love as mothers by nature are. The fathers also often have a warm and soft corner for their children. Mere affection for children does not make a Sansi female a good mother because she is generally illiterate and some of her sisters are hygienically dirty and backward

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in their outlook. In maintaining children one sees a world of difference between the children of educated and illiterate mothers. There is no doubt that poverty and untidiness are closely connected together, yet cleanliness is more an outcome of conscience. Even some well-to-do Sansi families are seen in a dirty condition in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar. Very few mothers care to bathe their children daily. They do not care to wash their clothes and change them regularly as hygienically required.

Coming to the study of the site of the houses of the Sansis it is commonly seen that they do not like to live within the houses whose compounds are common with those of the people of other castes. So in the villages, the houses of the Sansis are always found apart from the houses of other people. Here one important fact may be seen : the Sansis do not live among the Bhangis, Chamars and Chuhras. In the Punjab the separate habitations of the Bhangis, Chamars and Chuhras are called *thatties* or *chamarties*, but the Sansis are never seen to live there. They are not rich and their houses are usually *kacha*, having plastered walls.

The houses of some Sansis are found in a squalid condition. The household articles are seen scattered everywhere and the utensils lying in a disorderly way. Their houses lack ventilation. They do not have any particular beliefs or superstitions to make their houses face in a certain direction. Some of their houses are seen enclosed with a wall higher than an average man, but generally the enclosure is knee-high or waist-high. There is always a high or low wall between the two adjacent Sansi houses. If space allows, the pens of sheep and goats are set up within the compound, or in a corner of the compound of the house. On one side of the compound, one may see the *kacha* mangers of the cattle and nearby are the pegs to which calves are tied. Now the Community Project has allotted manure pits to all the village families, outside the circular road of the village. But before the advent of this department, the houses of all the Punjabis and the Sansis also were seen with heaps of cow-dung in one of the corners of the compound. The condition of the houses of the Sansis of Majha is usually dirty because due to some restriction on their females as already described in the Sansi Panchayat System, the women are not interested in maintaining the walls and roof of their houses.

The Sansi men rise in the morning, go out for ablutions, check their cattle and animals and those who smoke take some puffs of hukka in which they indulge like opium-eaters. The daily

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programme of the Sansi family can be briefly described as under :

After rising and going out for easing themselves, the Sansi women pick up a broom and clean their houses. After this some may grind grain on the hand grinding-mill *(chakki)* and if they have milch cattle, they wash the wooden churner *(madhani)* and its strings *(netra)* and churn curd. In some houses it is seen that in the daytime some women spin on the country spinning wheels *(charkha)*. Some good and wise women-folk pass time in mending, sewing and embroidering clothes, but most of the women-folk pass their time in gossip. They prepare two meals a day and after every meal, they clean their utensils with sand or ashes and arrange them on *parchhatis*. After taking *chhahwela* (breakfast) they begin their day's work. The grown-ups among men go out with their sheep, goats, pigs or other cattle to graze them outside. If it is so required, the girls and women may also attend to this work. The grown-up males who do not have any cattle to attend to, go out to find work somewhere or to do some odd job for the village Jats. The young boys go to school. In the evening the family collects again. The animals come back from their day's browsing. The sheep and goats are folded in the pen *(wara)*. The pigs are interned in the piggery. The cattle are tied with tethers. The dinner is prepared by the women and at night they also cook some vegetables or pulses.

Their daily routine of work keeps changing according to the nature of the season and type of work. After meals at night, the Sansi children are in the habit of listening to stories or *baats* or riddles *(pahelis)*, from their elders. The Sansis are a great source of folklore which they relate to their children, and thus their heritage continues from generation to generation. Some old Sansis give oral lessons to their sons or grandsons regarding the genealogies of Jats, while lying in their beds at night. In short, this is the way in which the Sansi family of the Punjab passes the day.

Pregnancy and Birth

Barrenness of women is hated universally and the Sansi society also abhors it. Like other Indians they are very fond of having children after marriage. If, due to any cause, an unusual delay is experienced in the birth of the first child, then all concerned are worried. For getting a child they worship the shrines of their

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sainted dead. They pray to gods and goddesses. They offer sacrifices to their ancestors and even entreat the saints with gifts. Just like the rest of the superstitious Indian society, they tie enchanted threads round their necks, arms and legs. These enchanted threads are prepared by the incantations and charms of faqirs, gods, goddesses and saints. They are now gradually giving up the old magical beliefs and are taking to the Hindu and Sikh faith more enthusiastically. They offer prayers and gifts and vow to go on pilgrimages to the sacred temples of different gods and goddesses. Some of the Sansis also pay homage and go to the Sikh shrines like that of Hari Mandir Saheb of Amritsar, Taran Tarn, Anandpur and Dera Wad Bhag Singh.

Pregnancy. The Sansis believe that sex is the mystery of God but they are nonetheless anxious to guess whether the pregnant mother will give birth to a male or female child. They consult fortune-tellers. They use their own guess-work also. They say that if, at the time of conception, a man's right nostril twitches, a male child will be born, but if the left nostril twitches then a girl will be born. If, at the time of conception, the mother lies on her right side the male child will be born, and if on the left then a female. In the advanced stages of pregnancy, if the right breast is larger than the left, then a male child will be born and if left breast is larger, then a girl will be born. They think that the desires of pregnancy start four or five months after conception and these desires are thought to be the desires of the child. So they must be fulfilled, otherwise the child will die or will not attain full and proper development. All hot foods are avoided by the pregnant mother lest t ey should cause abortion.

The Sansis are especially prone to believe that the pregnant mother is affected by witchcraft, ghosts, *bhuts* and malignant spirits. So they take special care of the pregnant women. The places haunted by spirits and ghosts are avoided. She must remain at an arm's length from witches and barren women, even from their shadow.

In most advanced stages of pregnancy, if the pregnant woman shows more weakness than normal, they think that surely a male child will be born. A pregnant mother is not considered impure and unclean by the Sansis. From the very day of conception she continues to attend to every household duty in a normal way. The people who can afford it give her very rich nourishment, knowing that the foetus also needs food for development. As the pregnancy advances, she avoids raising and lifting heavy weights such as the

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pitchers full of water. Just a few days before the delivery, the mother ceases to do much work in the house if she can afford to do so. If she is the only female member to attend to domestic duties in the house, then she carries on her work normally, leaving it only a few days before the birth of the child But sometimes, the child is born while the mother is working. Such births are called easy births, without any labour-pains.

Birth. At the time of acute labour-pains the midwife is called. She comes and seeing the condition of the mother, advises her accordingly. She massages her with mustard oil to soften the parts of her body concerned with parturition. At the time of parturition the mother is seated or posed by the accoucheuse on the ground. The birth of the child always takes place on the ground. Some rags, old clothes or a mattress are spread on which the mother is laid. At the time of parturition no male is allowed to enter the room and it is only the females who are present to help the midwife at the time of the birth of the child. No unknown woman is permitted to enter the house so that she may not do any magical harm to the mother and the child. They believe that at this time the diabolical, demoniacal and other evil spirits attack the mother and the new-born child. So *guggal* is burnt in the cinders kept in a vessel. Its smell is believed to scare away the malignant spirits. At this critical juncture, sacrifices and gifts are promised to the sainted dead ancestors, gods and goddesses, if the birth of the child becomes easy and harmless and the child survives. It may be mentioned that almost all these customs are common to all the people of the Punjab.

Another belief is that if a mother works, eats or drinks something at the time of an eclipse (solar as well as lunar), the child will be born with a deformed body and this deformation is termed *changrahan* or *surajgrahan.* During the advanced stages of pregnancy, the mother keeps with her some iron arm, a knife, a stab, a spear-head, a dagger or a sickle or a hatchet as most of the superstitious people believe that demons fear arms made of iron. Although the women present at the time of birth may help the midwife and encourage and bless the mother, yet it is only the *dai* or accoucheuse who receives the child. The first curiosity of all present is about the sex of the baby which they see just at delivery. The midwife does not give the child to anybody. She cleans the mouth, ears and eyes of the child. At this tender and flexible stage of the baby's body, she shapes its nose, lips and ears very carefully. The fingers, toes and all the other parts and organs of the body of

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the child are carefully examined by the midwife. Then she rubs the baby with wheat flour or some dried dust, and then wraps it in old clothes or rags. After drying the wet body of the child, she places the baby on soft mattress. A lock of hair from the head of the baby is cut with scissors and tied in a piece of cloth. Then it is hung on the roof of the house. This is done to defend the child from demons and ghosts so that they may not attack the new-born baby. They do this to counter-attack the demons as they believe that by cutting the hair of the baby, the baby has already been attacked.

Then she turns her attention to the mother who is lying. She washes her mouth, cleans her body and then cuts the naval cord or umbilical cord (*naroo*). The placenta (*jeore* or *aul*) is handled very carefully. After the birth of the child, not even a moment is lost to handle it because the placenta should never be taken or eaten away by some animal. It should never fall in the hands of an unknown woman and particularly one who is barren. The umbilical cord and placenta are buried in a corner of the house and earth is beaten hard over it. They believe that if the earth is beaten hard, the child and the mother remain well and peaceful. According to their conviction, if a barren woman eats the placenta and umbilical cord the mother and the child fall sick and ultimately they die, but on the other hand the barren woman becomes fertile. Another belief concerned with the depth of the burial of umbilical cord and placenta is this that the deeper it is buried the longer will be the interval between the birth of this child and the next to be born.

After this, baby is given a bath in lukewarm water. Now the other women and the members of the family can see and handle the child. The birth of twins is greatly appreciated if both the babies are of the same sex, but they are thought to be unlucky if they happen to be of opposite sexes. A child born with teeth has two indications : either it will die soon or if it survives it becomes a very great and renowned personality.

Mathe Lagna. All the people attach special importance to the person whom they happen to meet or see first of all, after getting up from their bed in the morning. This first meeting is called *mathe lagna.* The belief is that the person met or seen affects the passage of day and if anything good or bad happens to them, they ascribe it to that individual. This is why that most of the people, even the educated ones, hang the pictures of saints, gurus and holy men in their houses to be able to cast the first glance at them at

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the time of rising in the morning. Similarly the first meeting with an individual, on the annual days like Shangrand (the first day of the month) has definite importance attached to it. These two types of meetings are believed to affect a person for a day or for a year respectively. But *mathe lagna* at the time of birth has become very momentous because it is believed that the child will take after the habits and way of the life of the individual whom it sees first of all after taking birth. So just before the birth, during parturition and after the birth, undesired persons are not allowed even to see the mother because the belief is that the sight of bad persons affects both the mother and the child at this time.

Gurti. This word is derived from *gur* or molasses. Most people have the conviction that the *gurti* is very important for the new-born. If *mathe lagna* influences an individual for a day, a month or a year, the *gurti* bears a life-long impression on the child. This is the reason why the midwife is not allowed to give *gurti* to the child, and particularly if she belongs to some low caste like Chuhri, Chamari and Mazahbi, etc. This seems to be a groundless belief which should be discouraged by educated and intelligent persons. *Gurti* is the first edible which is put in the mouth of the child. Some *gur*, *saunf* and dry rose-petals are boiled in a small quantity of water. They form a very delicious and light laxative decoction. An elderly and noble man or woman puts this *gurti* in the mouth of the child This laxative cleans the digestive system of the baby. The mother is given hot milk or tea. She is not fed on solid food for at least a week. The baby is given the essence of rose flowers. After a day or two the flow of the mother's milk becomes regular and sufficient. The first milk is not given to the child and two or three times it is fully spilt on the ground. This spilling of milk has two purposes—the first milk *(doka* or *kil)* is considered injurious, being too much heavy for the tender stomach of the child, and secondly in a way the mother earth is propitiated. Within a week, the scab *(kharind)* of the wound of umbilical cord is shed and the wound heals up. This scab is also buried underground. If the child is very beautiful, the marks of soot or lamp black *(kalakh)* are made on its face, forehead and cheeks, to avoid the effect of the evil eye.

Partiality of Sexes. It has already been mentioned that in India a greater joy is felt at the birth of a son than a daughter. The *dai* is given the soiled clothes of the mother, some new clothes, grain, *gur* and some money, but she is surely given more emolument and gifts at the birth of a son than that of daughter. At the

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birth of a son, *gur* or jaggery is distributed among the people. The *laagis* are given *laags*. At the birth of a daughter, nothing is done, but at the birth of a son, a thick and bold line of cow-dung is drawn all around the walls of the house to mark that a boy has been born. Another custom universal in the Punjab is that the green leaves of branches of *shareenh* are hung at the door of the house. The Sansis also do it. The branches are never removed by anybody, and they wither, break and disappear by themselves in course of time.

Nutrition of Mother and Child. After four or five days the mother begins to take very nutritive food. Generally she takes *panjiri* or *phaljira* specially prepared for this purpose. It is prepared with jaggery, baked wheat flour and a liberal quantity of ghee. The child is fed only the breast-milk of the mother. By and by, the mother takes all normal food.

Sootak. This is one of the greatest social disabilities of Indian women and the Hindu society takes it very seriously. *Sootak* means impurity. Up to the time of delivery the woman is not impure, but just at the birth of the child, she contracts *sootak* or impurity. During this period she cannot touch anything in the house, the clothes, the utensils or even other persons. She remains confined to her bed and takes complete rest During this period she is given separate utensils for use which are kept under her cot. The midwife comes regularly and presses the body of the mother and foments her private parts with a heated clod or a piece of brick. As a rule this period of confinement or *chhila* should last for forty days, but generally it ends after five, seven, nine or eleven days. This is called *chauke charna* (to enter the hearth-square or *chauka*). They think that if septicaemia is to appear, it makes its appearance in the wound of the umbilical cord by this time; otherwise they think the mother and the child are in perfect health. During the *sootak* period the husband does not observe any couvade and discharges his normal duties. On this day, the house is plastered with cowdung and some sweet dish, generally rice, *churma* or pudding are prepared. *Guggal* is burnt to scare away the evil spirits. The mother takes her first bath after the birth of the child. She wears new clothes. The child is also clothed in new apparels. We may note that generally, before this, the child is clothed in old clothes borrowed from somebody else.

From this day onwards, the mother resumes her homely duties and she can cook and serve food to others. Prior to this the child is not taken out of the room where the mother is kept. Any

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member can now take the child out within the precincts of the house and play with it. After a month or so the parents of the female child bring new clothes for it. They also bring sugar and ghee. The carpenter of the village brings *guli danda* for the child and he is given a rupee and some *gur*. The reason for bringing this *guli danda* is that the carpenter offers his wishes for the rapid and healthy growth of the child so that it may soon be able to play the game of *guli danda* which is very popular in almost the whole of India. The scientific reason for the *sootak* seems to be the creation of conditions for complete rest which the weak mother needs badly. The mother keeps some iron arms under her pillow during the *sootak* period, too:

Dhaman. Forty days after birth and within six months, the people who can afford it celebrate the Dhaman ceremony of a new-born son. This ceremony is not essential, but voluntary. Usually Dhaman is held for a male child but sometimes some people celebrate it at the birth of female children also. It is celebrated with greater enthusiasm if previously children have died soon after birth or if they have only female children Under these circumstances the parents have a great yearning to have a son at whose birth they celebrate Dhaman with great pomp and show. The parents who have no issue at all may perform the Dhaman even at the birth of a girl who gives them as much joy as the birth of a son. Some people celebrate the Dhaman of a girl, if they have many sons and after great wishes and prayers they are blessed with a girl. On this occasion all the friends and relatives are invited and a sumptuous feast is given to them. They contribute gifts, clothes and money to the father of the child. Money which they contribute is known as *neondra*. After an exhaustive study of Hindu manners, customs, ceremonies and rituals, the author has not been able to find the origin of the ceremony of Dhaman. But it may be concluded that after six months the teeth of the child begin to erupt and the child begins to eat solid food. So this feast of Dhaman is because they are glad that, like grown-ups, the child has also begun to take solid food and its survival has become more secure.

Nomenclature. The Sansis of old have not established any regular and rigid system of nomenclature. The system of nomenclature often gives a very useful clue to the religion, nativity and beliefs of a people. The Sansis do not engage any Brahman or a professional name-giver who offers a scheme or list of names to be selected by the members of the family. The selected name is given to the child. The name-

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giving ceremony has no social importance for the Sansis of old views. Sometimes they simply discuss in their own family and select any name for the child. Sometimes they accept the name suggested by the maternal uncle of the child or some other close relative. In naming the child some interesting practices are found. If the children of a mother repeatedly die, she gives the child a very contemptible name so that the god of death may hate the child and should not touch it. Examples of such names are found these days also in Sansi society. The author has come across names like Marjana and Aivenjana which literally mean 'Die-away' and 'Worthless'. Like Hindus, the Sansi women do not use the names of their husbands and ancestors of their in-laws. So, at the time of naming a child, the women-folk avoid the names of the father, other relatives and ancestors of the child so that the mother may not utter such a name. Like other Hindus and Sikhs, Sansi names are followed by Singh, Lal, Chand, Dayal, Sarup, Ram, Prakash, etc. But the first part of the name usually represents a plant, a flower, a day, a month, a river, an animal or a city, etc. just like the Hindu system of nomenclature. Some of them have Muslim names also. In order to understand the actual system of Sansi nomenclature, we give below some samples :

	Name	*Meaning*	*Sex*
1.	Sohana	Handsome	Male
2.	Sohani	Beautiful	Female
3.	Rangoo	Colourful or romantic	Male
4.	Kahda	An insect	,,
5.	Jogi	An ascetic	,,
6.	Bhagtu	A saint	,,
7.	Amru	Immortal	,,
8.	Reshmen	Silken	Female
9.	Sukha	Peaceful	Male
10.	Mewa	Fruit	,,
11.	Buta	Plant	,,
12.	Sher	Lion	,,
13.	Tittar	Partridge	,,
14.	Chembeli	Jasmine	Female
15.	Gulab	Rose	Male
16.	Dittoo	Giver	,,

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	Name	*Meaning*	*Sex*
17.	Mangal	Tuesday	Male
18.	Budhu	Wednesday	,,
19.	Maghar	Name of a month	,,
20.	Tota	Parrot	,,
21.	Laheri	Name of a city	,,
22.	Jammu	Name of a city	,,
23.	Karmon	Blessed or lucky	Female
24.	Balkari	Powerful	Male
25.	Lal	Red	,,
26.	Hira	Diamond	,,
27.	Hazari	Owner of a thousand	,,

The above names are of the names of old Sansis. It is a common practice among the old Sansis to call each other by half names. Lal will be called Laloo, Khushal will be called Khushali, Nihal will be called Nihalu, etc. At present, the Sansis name their children with full-fledged Hindu or Sikh names A Sikh name is Sohan Singh, but a Sansi was called Sohana or Sohani. Similarly, a Hindu name is Bhagat Ram, but a Sansi was known as Bhattu. The old Sansis do not care much for courtesy and especially so when they are addressing another Sansi. They have now changed a great deal and their names are complete Hindu or Sikh names. We give a small list of their male and female names below :

Male names : Bhagat Ram, Buta Ram, Amar Nath, Mehnga Ram, Ram Chand, Nirmal Das, Asa Singh, Bihari Lal, Nirmal Singh, Vidya Sagar, Darshan Singh, Gurdiyal Singh, Ishar Das, Roti Ram, Sher Singh, Ram Lal, Raja Singh, Bachan Singh, Arjan Singh, Milkhi Ram, Rasila Ram, Surjit Singh, Mulk Raj, Karam Chand, Banta Singh, Dogar Mal, Purna Chand, Ranjit Singh, Gharib Das, etc.

Female names : Vidya Devi, Koshalia Devi, Labh Kaur, Ram Rakhi, Harbans Kaur, Sita Devi, Charan Kaur, etc.

So it is clear that in Sansi nomenclature a socio-religious change has occurred. Some of them now consult the Brahman nomenclator or they give a name to the child according to the Sikh rite as the *vaak* of the Guru Granth decrees. The system is that the reader of Guru Granth Saheb opens the Holy Book at random and recites the Shabad (hymn) on which his glance by chance falls. The first alphabetical letter is noted and any name beginning with this letter can be accepted by the parents and thus the Sikh name is given to the child. The Brahman nomenclator

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has his own scheme of giving names. He offers a list of names and advises them according to the time of the birth of the child and the 'lagan'. After due contemplation the Brahman gives a name to the child.

Suckling and Weaning. The milk of a mother is the best and natural nourishment for a child. The ways of nature are mysterious. Some mothers can suckle twins and still the milk may be more than needed by the twins, but some mothers do not have enough milk even for a single child. Then they supplement the requirement of the baby by supply of milk obtained from elsewhere. Sometimes the milk of a mother may be defective and it may not be advisable to suckle the child at all. In this case the child is entirely fed on the milk of animals, preferably on the milk of a goat or a cow. Sometimes the children are also fed on the milk of some other female relation.

Another question arises as to how long a child is fed at the breast of its mother. If a mother does not conceive soon after the birth of the child being suckled by her, then the child keeps suckling her mother for a long time which may extend even to two years. But as a rule after a year and a half or two at the most, the mother weans her child. She uses different methods to wean the child from her breast. In order to do this she uses the following methods :—

1. She tries to make the child play alone or leaves it with others so that it should not suck her breast if it is kept in her lap.
2. Whenever the child approaches her mother for sucking, she very reprovingly spits and says, *O ganda, O ganda* (O dirty, O dirty). In this way she psychologically infuses in the child a dislike for taking milk. Thus the child avoids touching the breasts of the mother and is gradually weaned.
3. If the child still persists to be suckled, then the mother besmears her teats with wet earth, soot, cowdung or with some bitter solution. Thus the child is weaned and it entirely lives on the solid food or on the milk of animals.

Childhood. Now the child becomes more independent and up to the age of six or seven it has to do nothing except play or assist the mother and others in petty jobs of the house, like carrying and fetching small articles and utensils as the need arises. At this stage the milk teeth of the child begin to fall and the permanent teeth replace them. Though the custom is now disappearing, previously the ears

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and nose of the girls were pierced. On piercing, a plug of wood is put in the hole till the wound heals and the hole assumed a permanent shape. Then earrings *(nattis* or *murkis)* or the nose-ring (*nath* or *laung*) is put in the hole. Formerly some of the boys also had their ears pierced but now this custom has died away.

Women in Menstruation

In the past the Sansis used to attach great importance to a woman during her menstrual period and she was treated like an outcaste, but now this practice is disappearing. There is no system of bachelor's quarters or segregated dormitories for the boys and girls as it is found among the aboriginal tribes of Munda, the tribes of Chhota Nagpur or in the Gonds of Bastar. It is thought to be much below the sense of decency and morality in the Sansi society.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

MARRIAGE RITES

"Marriage with a good woman is a harbour in the tempest of life, with a bad woman it is a tempest in the harbour."
—J.P. SENN.

PRELIMINARIES TO MARRIAGE

Betrothal. The old and experienced Sansis say, "A young unmarried daughter at home is like a hungry lioness; either marry her at proper time, or she will eat you up". This maxim means that a young marriageable girl is a great responsibility to the parents. The honour of the family is in her hands. So she should be married as early as possible. The Sansis take special care to marry their girls just when they become young. It is universal in all civilized societies that betrothal or engagement always precedes marriage. A betrothal is a formal commitment on either side that a certain boy shall marry a certain girl and vice versa. If marriage is a social or public sanction to husband and wife as sexual mates, the betrothal is a solemn pledge to join hands at a future date to become husband and wife. According to the general custom of the Punjabis, the Sansis call betrothal *kurmai* or *ropna*. They try their best to engage their girls up to the age of ten or twelve. Proposals for a suitable boy are discussed in the family. Close relatives may also give their opinion in this matter. Sometimes the maternal uncle or some other relative requests the hand of the girl for a suitable boy whom he proposes. The oral negotiations are made by the parents or the guardians of the boy. After formal and mutual consent, the father, elder brother or some other responsible relative goes to the house of the boy and places a rupee in the hands of boy and they call it *munda thakna*. To engage a boy means to stop his parents from accepting any other relation than their daughter. The guardian or the father of the girl puts a *chhohara* in the mouth of the prospective son-in-law and it is from this *chhohara* that the word *chhohara* is equivalent to betrothal in the Punjab. Then the parents of the boy send new clothes,

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chhoharas, mewa, badam, gari, makhane, menhendi, etc. to the girl, which are put in her lap. Glass bangles (*vangan*) are usually sent to the girl. The colour of the glass bangles should preferably be green. The girl distributes the gifts of her in-laws among her friends. Some persons settle a bride-price also at this time but few Sansis accept bride-price for their daughters as it is considered degraded. It may be mentioned here that under normal circumstances the proper ages of the spouses are not lost sight of. A girl is always younger than the boy, and this is what biology approves.

Gandhin. After sometime, according to the ages of the boy and the girl, the anxiety of marriage increases for their parents. They now think of fixing the date of the marriage. It is the act of fixing the marriage-date from which the term *gandhin* is derived. In olden times there used to be no literacy and on account of having no media of writing, people used to tie a certain number of knots on a thread, a rope or a cloth. The knots were given according to the number of days which were fixed for the celebration of a certain function. With the passage of one day, one knot used to be untied until the last knot was to have its turn of being untied and on that day they could know the day fixed for the proposed function. The *gandhin* signifies that once the forefathers of these Sansis used to fix the dates of their functions by means of tying knots or *gandhin* to threads, ropes or clothes. The word *gandhin* itself means a knot. This also proves that the Sansis are really very ancient people of the land of five rivers, and they retain their ancient culture even today. We read in the history of Vedic language that even the word *granth* is derived from the word *gandh* or knot.

So *gandhin* is the fixing of the date of marriage. The father of the girl sends a message to the parents of the boy that they should come for *gandhin* on such and such a date. The father of the boy goes to the father of the girl, with some relatives. A frugal and wise person will not take many men with him and thus he may save the father of the girl some expense. There is a great feast of rice and ghee. The use of liquor is lavish. The father of the boy gives clothes and rupees to all the female relatives on the girl's side, who are present at the function and the date of the marriage is fixed. Some *mauli* is brought and seven knots are given to its threads. Perhaps this is the indication of the fact that in olden times the ceremony of *gandhin* used to take place seven days before the marriage, but seven knots do not have

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any significance today. After fixing the date of marriage the parents and other relatives of the boy go back and both the parties get busy in the preparation of marriage.

Maiyan. Like other customs, *maiyan* is also a common custom which all the Punjabis and the Sansis observe. *Maiyan* is held three or four days before the marriage. Close relatives are invited. Some wheat grains are boiled in water and when they swell and become soft, the water is thrown off and the boiled grains of wheat are called *ghungnian.* Then *gur* is mixed with them. After this the boy is seated facing towards the east. The women and the girls sing songs and four women hold a *saloo* or *phulkari* over the boy holding it at all the four corners and stretching it just like a canopy. The sister-in-law of the boy ties the *gaana* (a wrist cord) round the right wrist of the boy. *Gaana* is made of red and yellow threads called *mauli.* Seven knots are tied to the *gaana.* The ceremony of *maiyan* takes place for both the sexes, three or four days before the marriage. Then the sister-in-law or *bhabhi* puts five jointed-handfuls (*buks*) of *ghungnian* in the lap of the boy, which he distributes among the people who are present there. Here comes another interesting belief of the Punjabis. They think that if the boy gives a good slap to a person who is *chhara* (one who is facing difficulty in getting married) just in course of distributing *ghungnian*, then the *chhara* will soon be married like the boy himself.

When the boy is seated for the *maiyan* ceremony, some coins are placed under his feet, which are given to a barber woman. This custom also proves very expensive as rice or *khichri* and ghee are used liberally. At this ceremony the guests present take as much ghee as they can. At night a thick solution of *mehandi* is prepared which is applied by the women to the palms and soles and even the nails of the boy. They try to apply *mehandi* when he falls into a profound sleep and they call it *chori* (theft) because the boy is unaware of what has happened to him. This completes the ceremony of *maiyan.* In the celebration of *maiyan*, there is no difference in ceremonial manners, whether it is a boy or a girl, excepting that greater expenditure is incurred for a boy than a girl. The *gaana* must be kept intact to be untied after the marriage is over. From this day onwards the boy keeps, in his hands, a stab, a sword or a stick of iron to avoid evil spirits, ghosts, witches and demons. Before taking up the social customs it is proper to study how marriage sociologically functions in the Sansi society.

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System of Marriage

Monogamy and Polygamy. Monogamy is the rule generally accepted by Sansi society. In monogamy one husband can have only one wife and vice versa. Polygamy is not generally approved in this society and it is detested.

Polyandry. The practice of a woman having more than one husband at a time is unknown to the Sansis. So no Sansi woman can indulge in the practice of polyandry.

Polygyny. The practice of a husband having more than one wife is also interdicted under the moral restrictions of the Sansis. In few cases we may see a husband having two wives, but it is only done if his brother's wife is a widow or his wife's sister is a widow. In order to support the children of widows and by force of circumstances, polygyny may be practised since, according to the Sansis and the Punjabi society as a whole, a man can marry the widow of his deceased brother or a widow who is the wife's sister. Such a polygynous marriage is entered upon with the consent of his real wife and other relatives. There are a few cases of Sansis where polygyny is found, but there is not even a single instance where a wife has more than one husband.

Avoidance of Certain Persons in Marriage

Endogamy and exogamy are practised by the Sansis according to the Hindu caste system. The Sansis are endogamous and so they can marry only with the Sansis and with no other community at all. But a Sansi can never marry within his own clan, sub-caste or sect. He must find his wife outside his own clan. In this respect he practises exogamy. In short the Sansi community is endogamous, but if considered clan-wise then it is exogamous. This question is also interesting. The Sansis divide themselves into two main classes—Mahla and Beehdoo, and then into many subclans and *gotes* All the clans of Mahla cannot intermarry and similarly all the clans of Beehdoo are prohibited to inter-marry. The descendants of Mahla inter-marry with the descendants of Beehdoo and vice versa.

In West Punjab, among some Sansis who are under the impact of Islam, the rule of exogamy is confined only to clans and not to Mahla and Beehdoo. For instance, the clans X & Y, in spite of being the descendants of Beehdoo, can intermarry, but a member of X cannot marry within his own clan. There are some people

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who do not marry even within the clans of their mothers, but some of them do it. Rigidly speaking a Sansi cannot marry within the clan of his father. The sororate and levirate marriages are legitimate in the Sansi society.

Besides these restrictions, in spite of the clans being permitted to intermarry, they cannot marry if the spouses are unequal in rank of relationship. Suppose a man named X has married a woman named Y. X has a real young nephew, named N. X's wife Y has her younger sister named S. Now N cannot be allowed to marry S and S is in a way the aunt of N, being the sister of X's wife. So Sansi society will not allow such a marriage, but the Jats of the Punjab commonly practise this system of marriage.

The custom of hypergamy is in vogue in some sections of this community. They can take a girl in marriage from a lower caste but they do not give their girl to a member of some lower caste. It was seen in course of investigations about hypergamy that Sansis were married to Badia women but never give their girls to Badias, they being of a lower caste. Similarly we find more cases of hypergamy. Some conservative Sansis do not approve a member of their community marrying a girl of some other community even if she be a member of some high caste. Although the Sansis are bound hand and foot by the chains of caste system, yet we may hope that after a decade or two education and enlightenment will break their chains.

Forms of Marriage

1. Negotiations. This is a universal means of settling a marriage. Both the parents of a nubile girl and a marriageable boy are on the outlook to find a suitable match. In this respect the couple has no concern or we may say that the girl and the boy do not marry but they are married. The Sansis settle ninety-five percent of their marriages, by negotiations.

2. Marriage by Purchase. Generally the Sansis dislike and condemn the bride-price but some base people, and particularly those of Majha, are found to accept bride-price. They demand a price and the needy husband pays to get the bride. This system is not common among the Sansis but its presence cannot be denied absolutely as the Sansis of Gurdaspur practise this social evil.

3. Marriage by Capture. This is an ancient practice and it is in vogue especially when human society lives a tribal and nomadic life. The warlike people who find it difficult to get a wife

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used to raid the enemy camp and make off with young girls. This system used to be a great cause of bloodshed. The people used to feel, "It is disgrace for the whole village if a girl is captured, but it is still greater disgrace if they come back without a girl". Now such instances are rare, though in olden times this might be the common practice everywhere.

4. *Marriage by Exchange.* This system rests on the saying, "Take thou my sister and give me thy sister". In the Punjab this system is hated by the Sansis. They call it *vatto satta* (barter). But in practice we find that there are certain poor and base persons of all communities, who marry their sons by *vatto satta.* Some Sansis also resort to this method, when it is difficult to get wives for their sons or otherwise daughter-in-laws. Among some self-respecting Sansi families it is found that the male members remain unmarried rather than get their brides by giving their sisters in exchange.

5. *Marriage by Service.* In this system the son-in-law renders a stipulated kind of service to his father-in-law in order to get married to his daughter. The background of this system is that a man who cannot pay money sells his labour in advance for his marriage and goes on serving till the condition is fulfilled and ultimately he is married to the girl for whose sake he serves her father. This form of marriage is not common among the Sansis and if a son-in-law lives in the house of his father-in-law, he is called *Ghar Jawai.*

6. *Love-Marriage and Elopement.* No instance of love marriage or civil marriage is found in Sansi society. As a matter of fact, the girls and the boys, and especially the girls, have no say in their matrimonial alliances. The father is all in all, and if a girl is fatherless then some other aged, close and wise relative carries out the matrimonial matters. By a true love-marriage we mean a marriage when the boy or the girl independently selects the spouse and marries, but the Sansis never allow their children to do it. Romance is a natural phenomenon of youth. Sometimes a young Sansi girl and a boy love each other. They know the social hurdles in their way and the result is elopement. Elopement is severely punished by the Sansi tribal panchayat, but still there are many cases of elopement in Sansi society.

7. *Widow Re-marriage.* At present there is no prohibition of widow re-marriage among the Sansis. Usually a widow is married to the brother of her deceased husband, sometimes in spite of his having a wife, but this is not very common as the

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children of two fathers and two mothers create a great problem. The co-wives (*saukans*) never pull on together peacefully and amicably. So the first effort is always to marry the widow to the unmarried brother of the deceased. Widow re-marriage does not present a difficult, expensive and social problem. If the widow is married to her brother-in-law (*deor* or *jeth*), the elders of the family simply gather, the father of the widow comes and gives his consent for her re-marriage with her proposed brother-in-law. Then the eldest brother of the deceased or some other relation of equal share throws a white new sheet over the couple seating them together. This custom is called *chadar panna*, in all the communities of the Punjab. After this the widow can decorate herself like a *sohagan* (a wife happily living with her husband). The Sansis do not like that a widow should be thrown out of their family and should go to some other man. So there is always an effort to keep her within the family. But without paying ransom or without the consent of the brother and the parents of the deceased, the widow cannot marry anybody on her own choice nor can her parents marry her anywhere else without the consent of the relatives of the deceased husband. Widow re-marriage is known as *kareva*.

Divorce

Divorce is the legal and permanent separation of husband and wife. Divorce is granted for the following reasons :

1. If a wife is barren and issueless, the husband may divorce her and marry some other woman.
2. If either of them is sexually loose and lacks chastity, the strained relations may result in divorce.
3. If a husband is negligent, lazy and loller (*makhatu*) and does not work and earn anything for the livelihood of the family, the wife, being fed-up with him, may obtain a permanent separation.
4. If a wife is frequently absent from her house without a cogent and proper reason and is in the habit of thieving, the husband may divorce her. Divorce is given with the consent of either party and in presence of elders and the tribal panchayat.

Marriage Rites of Hindu Sansis

Throughout India people believe in *sanjog* or fortune of

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marriage. In spite of the efforts of the couple, the suggestions and guidance of parents and other relatives, people say, throughout the world, that the marriages are fated and are made in heaven. The Sansis believe in this. As Shakespeare has rightly said "hanging and wiving go by destiny". At last the day of *sanjog* or destiny approaches and one day before the actual marriage of the boy, or *var* as known in the Punjab, the relatives reach the house of the bridegroom. Rice and meat are given to them. *Zardo* or *Plau* is a common food of this day. This meal on the day of the arrival of relatives (*mel*) is called *tak* or beginning or the first cut or bite to the food to be served and used during the marriage. Next day is the actual day of marriage. All are happy and attired in new clothes. In the noon pudding (*karah*) and meat are served. In some cases, sugar and ghee, besides meat, are also used. There is a great waste of food. All is glitter, with men in new clothes and women in gaudy garments and ornaments. Singing, fun and frolic go together. Marriage is the most expensive social function of the Sansis. Some well-to-do of them spend thousands of rupees on it and in the tradition of their Rajput ancestors hire elephants which accompany the marriage party. Next morning it is not binding for the father of the bridegroom to give the meal before the marriage party starts for the house of the bride but those who can afford to serve a meal on this day also do so. Generally the women keep sufficient food for the family from the last night's dinner and they eat it just before starting.

Gharoli. The boy keeps wearing the old clothes which he had on his person on the day of *maiyan* and the *gaana* too is kept intact. An hour or two before the start of marriage party, a *sarbala* or a helper of the bridegroom is selected. He accompanies and assists the bridegroom in the performance of some rites till the marriage is completed. He must be a married person having his wife alive, with him at the time of *gharoli.* The *sarbala,* along with his wife *sarbali,* takes a new and unused pitcher, whose neck is wrapped with yellow and red threads (*mauli*). They are accompanied by the bride-groom and many other women and young girls. All of them form a procession and the bridegroom is kept in the centre and over his head, a canopy of *saloo* is held, while walking. They sing *ghorian* (marriage songs) and go to a well to fill the pitcher with water and the pitcher is placed on the head of the *sarbali.* In a procession they come back to the house, singing. This custom is called *gharoli.* The name *gharoli* has been derived

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from *ghara* or pitcher, and *gharoli* means *gharewali* by which is meant *sarbali* who fetches the pitcher full of water from the well.

Khara. After this, ceremony of "turmeric anointing" (*vatna malna*) comes. Both the bridegroom and the *sarbala* are given a bath. A younger brother of the bridegroom rubs his body with a mixture of turmeric, oil and wheat flour. This mixture makes what is called *vatna* and it is a very good cleanser of body. The girls and women keep singing and the *saloo* is held over him stretched at all the four corners. The water brought by the *sarbali* must be used for bathing the bridegroom. After the bath, the bridegroom is given beautiful clothes which are usually snow-white. The bridegroom bathes, sitting on a small wooden bench (*chauki*). By this time a heap of new earthen lids of pitchers (*chapnis*) is made in front of the bathing bench. The bridegroom does not dismount from the *chauki* unless his maternal uncle gives him a big donation called *mamadan*. He gives him a handsome amount of money or promises to give him a cow or a buffalo according to his demand. Just after accepting a donation from his maternal uncle, he makes a jump on the *chapnis* with a thud and breaks all of them. A complete smashing of *chapnis* is considered a very good omen for the bridegroom and his family. This bathing and the following ceremony is called *khaara*. The old clothes which the bridegroom puts off are given to the barber. Then the pitcher in which the water is brought from the well as a *gharoli* is kept carefully as this very pitcher has got to be taken with the marriage party to the house of the bride. Along with the pitcher some *gur* and ghee are also taken which are carried to the house of the bride.

Sehrabandi and Neondra. After *khaara* the father of the bridegroom calls all the people who have come to attend the marriage function. All of them sit on a carpet or sheets. The bridegroom is seated in the centre and his father invokes God, Sansmal, Mahla, Beehdoo and other gods and goddesses saying, "*Ya Bhagwan, Sansmal, Mahla, Beehdoo, yaran baran te piro faqiro, dere dande ma'an sukh rekhwio te mere putta ki vel vadhao*" (O God, Sansmal, Mahla, Beehdoo, eleven, twelve, other gods and goddesses, keep peace in the family and bless and increase lineage of my son). Saying this he ties the marriage coronet (*sehra*) on the forehead of the bridegroom. At this function all the relatives who are present congratulate the father and bless the bridegroom. *Sehra* is a universal practice among all the communities and it is *sehra* which makes a man bridegroom and distinguishes him from

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the rest of the people. Now the *thaal* (a bronze plate) is kept near the bridegroom containing one rupee and some sugar. Then the work of *Neondra* begins. All the relatives and friends give their donations and *salaamis* to the bridegroom. All the donations are written and received with great care, to be doubly returned when the donors have marriages in their houses.

Janj, Braat or Marriage Party. Then the marriage party leaves for the house of the bride. Before starting, again the ancestors, gods and goddesses are invoked and the marriage party proceeds. The women can also go with the marriage party.

Ghori Charana. A *ghori* or a mare is saddled, but the animal must be in good health. The threads of *mauli* are tied to the mane of the mare. It is due to the mare or *ghori* that the folk songs of marriage are called *ghorian* in the Punjab. Now the *ghoris* are sung. The sisters or the sisters-in-law of the bridegroom hold the reins of the mare and the bridegroom mounts on it. The barber or somebody else offers grams, pulses (*dal*) to the mare while the bridegroom jumps over its back. The wife of bridegroom's brother applies collyrium (*surma*) to the eyes of the bridegroom. Then the sisters demand their *waag pharai* (handing over the reins) from the brother. He gives them money and they give him the reins of the mare. The barber also gets a rupee or two, for offering *dal* to the mare. At this time, some close female relatives wave coins round the head of the bridegroom and give them to the barber's wife. Then the marriage party starts for the village of the bride.

Jandi. Jand is a wild and thorny plant. It was the tree of *jand* of the Sahniwal jungle under which Mirza, the famous lover of the Punjab, was killed by the brothers and other relatives of his beloved, named "Sahiban". It is not clear how this rite began but it is prevalent among the Sansis of the Punjab as well as among other Punjabis. After leaving the mare the bridegroom is again accompanied by the women and young girls in a procession. This procession approaches a plant or tree of *jand*. Here the *mauli* is tied to one of the branches of the plant and the bridegroom gives a blow with his stab or sword to it. If it is cut with one blow, the omen is good. If not, even then it is not to be left uncut and the bridegroom cuts it with another blow or more. After cutting *jandi*, the marriage party goes straight to the house of the bride. On the way the party has great fun, jokes and jests. The Sansis are greatly fond of liquor and they go on with mild drinkings here and there. Some of the Sansi clans have

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set a rule that only a definite quantity of liquor should be taken from the father of the bridegroom, for the use of the marriage party. It is observed that in some cases the father of the bridegroom has to give 12 bottles of liquor, if he belongs to Beehdoo because Beehdoo had 12 sons, and 11 bottles if he belongs to Mahla, because Mahla had 11 sons. The marriage party can, according to circumstances, go on foot, or on horses, donkeys or camels. These days, if the journey is not short, the marriage party goes by bus or train. The fare of the marriage party is borne by the father of the bridegroom.

Dhukaa. According to the Punjabis the *dhukaa* means the reception to the marriage party. The time of *dhukaa* in Sansi society is better than of other Punjabis. Others receive their marriage parties in the evening or at night but the Sansis receive it in the afternoon or at midday. Regular *milni* or embrace-ceremony of the fathers of the bridegroom and the bride is observed. The marriage party reaches and the parents of the bride and their other relatives welcome them.

The marriage party must have a ram with it. This ram is called *mardan da chhatra.* Either this is taken by the father of the bridegroom from his own house or he pays the price of the ram to the father of the bride prior to the marriage, and he arranges for it and gives it to the bridegroom at the time of *dhukaa.* Anyway, the ram must belong to the bridegroom or his father. The father of the bridegroom brings *vari,* clothes, ornaments and *bidd* also along with him. *Bidd* consists of *gari, chhoras, saungi, misri, badam, mauli* and *mehandi,* etc.

When the bridegroom cuts the throat of the ram with his stab or sword which he has been keeping with him since the day of *maiyan,* the blood of this ram is propitiated by both the parties, invoking the names of Sansmal, Mahla, Beehdoo and other deities. Then both the parties sit face to face in the compound of the host or outside the house under some shady tree, and the marriage party is served with sweet water or sweet *lassi* (butter-milk).

Gora. After this, some old relatives and panches of the host ask the father of the bridegroom, "*Taun kitohra toan te kida aiya en*" ? (How and whence have you come?) By this they want to know his family lineage which he states and so proves that he is a true Sansi descendant of Mahla-Beehdoo. Both the relatives know each other, but it is just to prove that the marriage is legitimate and is according to the rules of the tribe.

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Then an elderly person exhorts him, "O father of the bridegroom, do not tell a lie in the court of Raja Sansmal and say if you have given any bride-price or the relation is given to you, *pun* (without any payment)?" If any dispute arises between the two parties, then it is settled there. It is notable that it is very rare that a Sansi tells a lie when sitting in his tribal panchayat, and so both the parties speak the truth at this time. This custom of questioning the father of the bridegroom at this juncture proves that the Sansi society does hate bride-price, but in spite of this they have a sanction for it, if the father of the bride is very poor. If he is so poor as to be unable even to feed the marriage party, then he is entitled to receive Rs. 60/- or seven sheep from the bridegroom, with which he bears the expenses of the food to be served to the marriage party. This price which is approved by the Sansi society is called *Haath*. After the approval of the congregation, the father of the bridegroom fills the pitcher with *sharbat*. It is the same pitcher which was used at the time of *gharoli* and whose water was used at the time of *khara* for bathing the bridegroom. Some *gur* is dissolved in the water and thus the *sharbat* is made. The *gur* is also the same as was brought from the house of the bridegroom. At this time the threads of *mauli* are tied round the neck of the pitcher (*dola*). Then this *sharbat* or *gora* is propitiated in the names of their deities and sainted dead, spilling it on the ground by handfuls or *chulis*. Then a bronze cup (*chhana*) full of *sharbat* is given to the bridegroom which he drinks. Then all the persons take this *sharbat* in small quantities. Some of it is given to the father of the bride and he distributes it to his own party.

While sitting here the marriage party is served with the midday meal which usually consists of pudding and meat. The young girls from the bride's side sing some couplets and name many dishes. Thus they do *janjbandi*, i.e., the prohibition of taking food. In return, if any person of the marriage party knows some counter-couplets to undo the *janjbandi*, the marriage party can eat food after he recites his couplets, otherwise the marriage party has got to pay Rs. 5/- to the girls before they can eat their food. The marriage party takes food sitting on the ground in a row or in a circle. At the time of *dhukaa*, the women-folk of the bride indulge in satirical and comic ribaldry called *sithnian* (satires). They are taken light-heartedly. The system of these satires also is prevalent in other communities of

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the Punjab. The women-folk stupefy the bridegroom and ridicule him and his companions. Some of the satires are noted below :

1. "We have a maize flower in the compound of our house, but the foolish bridegroom, son of an eloped mother, demands grains from us. The grain-parching-hearth (*bhati*) is not at work. O shameless, you have no shame at all."

2. "Our bride is delicate like the wire of gold. The bridegroom appears to be a potter. The couple does not behove. O shameless, you have no shame."

3. Then they turn to the other relatives and the companions of the bridegroom and say, "Those who eat onions give birth to he-buffaloes, they roll in the ponds and marsh. O bridegroom, they are your uncles".

4. "Those who have eaten *pichh* of rice give birth to bears. They dance from house to house. O bridegroom, they are your maternal uncles."

In this way there is great fun till the marriage party finishes food.

Gotaknala. This ceremony has great importance among all the people of the Punjab. The Sansis attach an unusual weight to it. No Sansi woman is accepted by her in-laws without completing the ceremony of *gotaknala*. *Gotakuala* is a term derived from *gote*, a sub-caste or a clan, and from *niwala*, a morsel of food In this ceremony the women-folk of both the sides eat together from the same vessel, with the bride. If the men bring a pitcher of *gharoli* and *gur* with them for the ceremony of *gora*, the women accompanying the marriage party bring ghee and sugar with them. At the time of taking the mid-day meal, the men celebrate the *gora* ceremony, but the women-folk of marriage party enter the inside of the house of the bride's parents. Hot *chapatis* are taken, which are mixed with sugar and ghee and thus *choori* is prepared which is served on a large platter. Then all the women and the bride eat together from this platter.

Rites about the Ram killed by the Bridegroom. The ram or *mardan da chhatra* has a great importance in ceremonies of Sansi marriage. After having the midday meal, some persons of the marriage party flay the ram. The meat is divided equally between the marriage party and the father of the bride. Over and above this fifty-fifty division, the liver, the head and the legs must go to the share of the father of the bridegroom. At night both the parties cook their shares of the meat separately. The meat of this ram is not mixed with other meat which

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is cooked for the people by the father of the bride. Then both the parties distribute the cooked meat among all the clans or sub-castes present there. Any person deprived of the share of the cooked meat of ram feels insulted and ostracised. So the cooked meat is distributed with great caution. At night the father of the bridegroom also distributes his share of the ram's meat among the members of his marriage party, but the liver, legs and head are to be eaten only by the bridegroom and the bride. At night the liver is roasted and preserved. The legs and the head are not cooked, but they also are cleaned and preserved. The father of the bride serves a sumptucus dinner to the marriage party at night. The Sansis are very fond of singing or listening to the singers, engaged by the father of the bridegroom and the bride as well. So they pass the night in singing and dancing.

Pheray. The Sansis perform the actual marriage ceremony, *pheray* (circumambulation), in the small hours of the night. The bride also undergoes the ceremonies of *maiyan*, *gaana*, *gharoli* and *khara*, just like the bridegroom. She is given a *sarbali* to assist her in the several rites. At midnight, a small pit is dug where the bride had bathed at the time of her *khara* ceremony. Some person of the marriage party brings seven green sticks of cotton or of *beri* tree in the belief that a fruitful plant or tree is auspicious for the marriage ceremony of the couple. An hour or two after midnight, *chhapri* or pit is prepared. Seven sticks are fixed in the ground round the *chhapri* at regular distances from each other. Then seven threads of *mauli* are wrapped round the sticks. The preparation of this pit in this manner is common among all the sections of the Sansis living in different parts of the Punjab. According to the ancient Aryan culture and religion the Sansis believe in water and fire as gods. One rupee and four annas are put in the pit, which are given to the maternal uncle of the bride, who supports her for the first two *pheras* or circumambulations. In the pit any of the following things are put :—

1. In most parts of the Punjab, water is put in the *chhapri*, with the wedlock. Then the water-god witnesses the solemn pledge of wedlock.

2. In Jind and some other parts of the Punjab, they put small pieces of dry wood and ghee which they burn while circumambulating. This represents their belief that the god of fire is a witness to the sacred pledge of wedlock. The ghee which is

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burnt as incense must belong to the bridegroom.

3. Some Sansis light dough-lamps or lamps made of kneaded wheat flour. In this case also the ghee must belong to the bridegroom. A *dupatta* or a turban-like cloth of the bridegroom is taken and seven knots are made in it. In the central knot a rupee is tied. Then this *dupatta* is tied round the waist of the bridegroom as a *kamarkassa* (cloth-belt). Then the *dola* or small pitcher of *gora* and the bronze-cup are brought. The pitcher is filled with water and again *mauli* is wrapped round its neck. Then everything is ready. The bride is brought covered with a long veil. All the important relatives of the bride and the bridegroom are present on this occasion. The father of the bridegroom must be there. Similarly the father of the bride, her maternal uncle, brothers and other close relatives must be present. Then a pitcher full of water is placed on the head of the bridegroom. The mouth of the pitcher is covered with the bronze cup or *chhana*. Now the bride is guided by her father, maternal uncles and brothers to get hold of the cloth-belt or *kamarkassa* of the bridegroom. The bridegroom leads her with a pitcher and cup on his head, which he supports with his left hand. The bride follows him catching hold of the *kamarkassa* with her right hand. The women-folk sing *ghoris* and other marriage songs, expressing *kaniyadan*. In the first two *pheras* the maternal uncle supports the bride and then the father and the brothers also perform this duty representing *kaniyadan* with their own hands. In all there are seven *pheras* in the Sansi marriage while in case of Hindus and the Sikhs there are four *pheras* or circumambulations. Generally no *mantras* or hymns are recited during the *pheras*, but of late some of the educated Sansis have begun to engage Brahman for performing the rites in the formal Hindu manner. Just after the termination of the seven circumambulations, without any pause, the bride enters the door of her father's house. The bridegroom follows her, still with the *dola* and the cup on his head. At this juncture the ceremony of 'fist opening' takes place.

Fist-opening or *muth kholni*. The bride sits inside the threshold, but the bridegroom stands outside the door. The bridegroom has to open the fist of the bride which she closes with all her force. He cannot use his left hand because he has to support his pitcher and cup on his head because at no cost should the pitcher fall from his head or the water spill. So he is in a dilemma. Great fun arises out of this struggle between

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the bride and bridegroom. At last he opens her fist and just at the moment of opening it, the bridegroom is immediately let in and is seated on the cot with the bride. Now the liver of the ram which was roasted the previous night is produced. The bride and the bridegroom put some morsels of roasted liver in each other's mouth. Then they are allowed to talk to each other. The *kamarkassa* is untied and the *dupatta* is given to the bride, which she has got to carry along with her to her in-laws, but she retains the rupee which was tied in the central knot of the seven knots in the *dupatta*, at the time of *pheras*.

Joban. *Joban* means youth or its expression. Now comes the last ceremony to complete the wedlock. The bridegroom and the bride are asked to touch their foreheads, face to face, which they do. Then they join the soles of their feet sitting face to face. This ceremony may be taken as introductory to the intimacy to be developed in future. Secondly, in this way they see each other's face, and a kind of familiarity is developed between them. The bridegroom might never have seen the bride before this. At the time of the *pheras* the bride covers her face with a long veil (*ghund*) At the completion of the ceremony of *joban*, they become full-fledged husband and wife. Now the bridegroom is pinched, twiched, taunted, teased and ridiculed by his *saalis* or sisters-in-law. After great deal of fun, the *saalis* let him off and he returns to his camp. Here again, one cannot help pitying the ill-informed writings of some authors. They had been mostly writing on the basis of second-hand information or hearsay, rather than by their own observation and research, mostly copying each other. We find Ibbetson's study of Sansis in the Census Report of Punjab, 1881, p. 577, literally reproduced on page 489 of Russell's fourth volume of *Tribes and Castes of Central India*. We read, "In the Punjab their marriage ceremony is peculiar; the bride being covered by a basket on which the bridegroom sits while the nuptial rites are being performed". This is just absurd.

Then the sun rises. The hosts become busy in arranging the last meal of the marriage party. By midday the sisters and other young female relations of the bride prepare her to leave for the village of her in-laws. The bridegroom and his *sarbala* are called. They are seated on the *palang* which is to be given in dowry. The bridegroom is given new clothes by his in-laws and he puts them on. At this time there take place many jokes at his expense. Then the cooked head and legs of ram are put in a

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vessel and the bridegroom and the bride dine together. The marriage party is served with food and the dowry is called *vakhala paana*. Lastly, a farewell is given to the marriage party. The departing time of a bride is a very heart-rending scene in Indian society. The girl leaves for her in-laws. She goes to unknown people, being severed from her beloved parents, sisters, brothers and relatives. At this time the eyes of anyone are naturally filled with tears. The relatives embrace the bride, one by one, and some of them give her money. Here one song of the departing women-folk cannot be ignored. The girl who has passed her babyhood, childhood and the best part of her youth with her parents, cannot live even for another night in the house of her father. The women sing in a chorus in which they depict the entreating of the bride and the replies of her father. Their song is translated into English as given below :

"O my dear father,
keep me for one night more.
O my dear daughter,
I cannot keep you any more.
Why can't you keep me,
For one night more in your house.
Where I have passed whole of my life !
My dear daughter,
I cannot keep you tonight,
Being bound by my dharma, pledge and social bindings."

The dowry is packed and the animals are handed over to the father of the bridegroom, if they are also given in dowry. The marriage party starts and the fathers of the bride and bridegroom throw coins over the marriage party and the couple. The children pick them up. Thus the bride is given the send-off and she goes to a new place, to strange people and to unknown relatives and friends. Perhaps this is the most difficult moment in the life of a woman.

Dolibandi. Among the Sansis of the Punjab the use of *doli* or palanquin for the bride is prohibited. Some of them spend thousands of rupees on the marriages of their daughters but they do not send her in a *palki* to her in-laws. She goes on a mare but these days she generally goes to her in-laws by bus or train. After detailed enquiries about the cause of *dolibandi* the author has gathered that their Rajput ancestors took a pledge not to use *palki* for the brides, when they were expelled from Rajputana. It was a common practice among the Rajputs that, when some right

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or position was wrested from them, they used to take pledges of renouncing some essentials of life till the time of regaining the lost position. As late as in the times of Akbar, the great and famous Rajput Maharaja Pratap took a pledge to sleep on the ground till he could regain his lost position. Many Rajput tribes were expelled from Rajputana by the attack of Allaudin Khilji in the 13th century. Most of them took different pledges. The Sansis tell that once in the disbanded and destitute condition of their ancestors, a bride was robbed by Muslim pirates of Khilji, while being carried in a *doli* to her in-laws. So their ancestors took a pledge not to use *palkis* for brides without regaining their lost prestige. So no Sansi uses a *doli* for this purpose. The possibility of this tradition became clear from the historic event which occurred in 1955 and we read about the de-notified tribes, "Many of these tribes belonged to Chittor in Rajasthan Union and had to leave it, when it was conquered by Allaudin Khilji, king of Delhi, in the 13th century. They vowed never to return to Chittor unless they conquered Delhi and have continued to wander here and there in course of which they have taken to criminality."[1] "This vow was fulfilled when early in 1955 some of them staged a symbolic comeback to Chittor."[2]

Most of the relatives take leave of the father of the bridegroom after the *vidaigi* (farewell) ceremony.

Rites at the House of the Bride's in-laws

Tel dhalna (Oil-spilling). Both the bridegroom and the bride reach the bridegroom's place with other relatives. Before entering the compound of the house, the mother of the bridegroom, his sisters and other relatives, spill some mustard oil in the way of the couple who lead the rest of the members of the returning marriage party. This is called *tel dhalna* and it is believed that this spilt oil dispels the evil spirits from the house lest they should attack the new couple.

Paani vaarna (Waving of water). Then the couple reach outside the threshold of the door and the mother of the bridegroom waves round the heads of the couple a small vessel full of water seven times, and after every round the bridegroom offers a mock resistance to her so that she may not be able to sip water from the vessel. But she sips it after every movement of the vessel made round the heads of the couple. This rite may

1 *Social Welfare*, p. 507-08, Govt. of India publication. 2 Ibid., f.n.

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signify the burning desire and thirst of the mother for marrying her son and for seeing her daughter-in-law. This sipping of water is an expression of her quenching the long-felt thirst.

Baroohn pharai (Touching the door-frame). Then the bride touches the door-frame of her new house for the first time and she enters the house after taking some gift from her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law gives her some ornaments. When the bride enters the house, all the women gather to see her and every one raises her veil and gets a glimpse of her face, praising and encouraging her so that she may feel at home and get rid of the nostalgia for her parents' house.

Gode to behna (Sitting on the knee). The bride sits on a small cot (*peehri*) and the youngest brother of the bridegroom (*chhota deor*) sits on the right knee of the bride. She fondles him and gives him one rupee. In the Punjab this rite is common in all communities. At night the father of the bridegroom gives a feast to the relatives who are present.

Gaana khedna (Playing the wrist cord). Next morning the *gaanas* of the couple are untied. A platter is filled with water and a *chhala* (finger ring) is wrapped in the threads of *gaanas*. Now both the spouses sit facing each other with the platter full of water between them. The wife of the brother of the bridegroom throws the *chhala* wrapped in the *gaanas* into the platter and both the spouses try their best to catch hold of the *chhala* first. This is done seven times and the spouse who catches the *chhala* more times wins. Then the toes of bride are put into the platter and the women who are present enjoy the game and take sips of water from the platter in which the bride has put her toes.

Makooi. Five *paropis* or two and half seers of *dalia* of wheat is preserved from the day of *maiyan.* Now the couple is seated together and they put *buks* of *dalia* several times in the hands of each other. This ceremony signifies the oneness of their economic life as they are exchanging and uniting their earnings. In other words, we may say that they are taught that from that day onwards what the wife earns belongs to husband and what the husband earns belongs to the wife. This ceremony puts the final touch to the nuptial ceremony, customs and rites of the Sansis of the Punjab. Most of the customs and rites described in the Sansi marriages are practised by almost all sections and groups of the Sansi community, but today these rites are disappearing. The time is not far when most of these rites will become extinct. So

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the preservation of the customs, rites and ceremonies of Sansis, will some day prove a great gift to the history of their culture and sociology.

Marriage Ceremonies of Sikh Sansis

It has already been mentioned that Budha Singh, the grandfather of the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the first member of the Sansi tribe who became a Sikh. Afterwards many Sansi families embraced Sikhism but those who had landed property and better socio-economic and political status amalgamated themselves with the Sikh Jats. At present, the Sansis of Punjab are becoming Sikhs in large numbers. Therefore, it is proper to describe the religious rites of Sikh marriage which they perform relinquishing the rites of the rest of the tribe which is predominantly Hindu.

The Sikhs call the actual marriage ceremony "Anand Karaj". Formal betrothal, however, is not a necessary part of the marriage ceremony. The marriage ceremony can take place without previous betrothal and without essentially fixing an auspicious day and it can be performed on any day convenient to both the parties. In Sikhism it is believed that the prayers offered to God, sanctify all acts, all times and all places. The marriage ceremony can be performed at any place where the Holy Book of the Sikhs (*Guru Granth Sahib*) is present. It must be performed in an assembly of the Sikhs which every Sikh is entitled to join as a member of the Sikh brotherhood. The secret marriage is not legitimate in the Sikh religion. The marriage can be performed anywhere but usually it takes place in the bride's house.

Before the marriage party departs for the bride's house, the bridegroom visits the Gurdwara (Sikh temple) and offers his prayers and presents for successful, peaceful and prosperous married life. Then the marriage party proceeds to the house of the bride, where both the parties meet and exchange presents. This is called *milni*. At the time of *milni* the following particular *shabad* (hymn) is sung. The *shabad* begins with the words, *Ham ghar saajan aae*. Its full text is :

> The friends have come to my house, the true one has brought us together.
> The union is according to will of God, in the union of hearts is the seed of tranquillity.
> What the heart was aspiring for has been obtained, the mind is pleased, the residence is decorated ;

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It is ringing with music, and with soundless sound,
The friends have come to our house.

After this *shabad*, a general prayer is offered and blessings of God and Guru are invoked. Usually the formal marriage ceremony takes place next day after the morning prayer. In the morning the *prakash* of the *Guru Granth Sahib* is done and canopies, mats or sheets are spread for the congregation. The bride and the bridegroom present themselves and are seated in front of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The bridegroom cleans a long *kirpan* (sword) and sits at the right side of the bride. Then the reader of the Holy Book, called Granthi or Pathi (Sikh priest) begins his duties. Any person whom the parties approve can do this as there is no ordained priesthood in Sikhism. The Granthi asks the bridegroom, the bride and their fathers or guardians to stand up. Then he offers prayer on their behalf and proposes the marriage. Then the Raagis (musicians) sing :—

Seek the grace of Almighty before undertaking anything.
By the kindness of Satguru who in the company of Saints explains truth.
Success has been attained, it is due to the True Teacher that we taste ambrosia.
O ! Thou destroyer of fear and embodiment of mercy bless thy servants with your grace.
Nanak says, by praising God, we understand the infinite.

Then the Granthi explains the duties of married life *(grahst)* and explains the way of true Sikh life to the couple. He then enunciates, quoting Gurbani (The words of Gurus), the means to get the happiness of married life :—

The bride should know no other man, but her husband, so Guru says.
She alone belongs to noble family, she shines with light,
Who is decorated with the love of her husband.
There is only one way, to the heart of the husband,
To be humble and true, and to obey his will.
It is the only means by which true womanhood is attained.
Happy are those, freed from conceit, who, by unstained giving,
Win the heart of the Lord.
Sweet in voice, humble in behaviour, the only ornament, unquestioned acceptance,
Such brides win the company of their beloved.
Ask the happy brides, how have they won the beloved ?

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They answer : by sweetness of speech,
Beauty of contentment and love by abstaining from falsehood.
A loaf of dry bread, bare ground or bed,
In company of the beloved, is full of happiness.
They who worship the true Lord attain respect and are safe.
They who serve others, says Nanak, the ignorant ones,
They endure death time and again.
He who created thee, and creating, gave you beauty, remember Him, night and day.
Let humility be the word, resignation the offerings,
Make tongue the mint of sweet speech, cultivate these habits, sister,
Then you will have your husband in your power.
Encroachment on another person's property, ignoble eye on another man's wife, speaking evil of another person, poison the life of man.
Increase your love with your own wife everyday,
But do not go to another man's wife, even in dream.
Like the bite of the poisonous snakes
Is the connection with another man's wife.

After giving these instructions as ordained by the Sikh Gurus, the Granthi asks the bride and the bridegroom to give their assent if they are prepared to accept the duties of married life. They give their acceptance by bowing their heads before the Guru Granth Sahib. The father, brother, maternal uncle or the guardian who is to give away the bride takes the edge of the bride's scarf (*dopatta, chunni* or *palla*) and ties it with the *dopatta* of the bridegroom. This is called *palle-lagana* and this the symbol of joining them together as husband and wife. The following *shlok* is read on behalf of the bride :

Applause and abhorrence, Nanakji, I let all pass.
I catch the edge of his scarf, everything else I let pass.
I feel all the relationships false, I cling to Thee, my Lord.

Then the Granthi reads the first *lavaan* or marriage hymn. In Punjabi *lavaan* means a long rope or *lajj*. So here *lavaan* also means ties which bind husband and wife together. After the first hymn, the couple move slowly and gently round the Holy Book, of course the bride following the bridegroom. The musicians sing the hymn, finishing as the couple steps in front of the Holy Book and takes seats bowing before it. The Granthi

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reads the sacred *lavaan* and the pair repeats the round like before. Similarly four hymns are read one by one, and the respective rounds are repeated by the couple.

Then 'Anand' or the song of bliss is sung. Then the congregation stands up and offers a general prayer for the happy life of the couple and thus the wedlock ceremony is completed. The parents are permitted to give whatever dowry they wish to give. A similar ceremony is performed for the marriage of a widow or a widower.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

DEATH CEREMONIES

"This land is the world of the dying, the next is the land of the living." —TRYON EDWARDS

THE SANSIS of the Punjab say, "A pitcher which is made must break one day". So the Sansis accept the truth of death which every one has got to face. In all other human societies certain rituals are followed on the death of a person, according to sex, age and the condition in which one dies. The Sansis have also well-defined rites of death.

Disposal of the Dead. As a rule, the Sansis cremate the dead. Throughout India, there is no Sansi group which has graves of their ancestors, who are treated as saints and are worshipped. Some of them, under the influence of Muslims, in the West Punjab, bury their dead but burial is not important among the obsequial ceremonies of the Sansis. Since ancient times, they have been cremating their dead. The Sansis who were expelled from Chittor, Ajmer and Marwar had been going to these places till recent times to burn their dead there and for worshipping the *chhatris* constructed on the cremation grounds of their dead ancestors. The fact of their annual worship of ancestral *chhatris* or *samadhis* is confirmed by Captain Ellis who was the Assistant to the Resident of Gwalior in 1842. Here again the proof of the Sansis being of Rajput origin is clear. Throughout Rajasthan, even now, one can see thousands of *chhatris* of Rajput families constructed over the cremation grounds or *marhis*. The Rajputs of Rajasthan perform the annual worship of *chhatris*. Captain Ellis narrates that it was a Sansi woman named Bootee who became angry with her tribesmen. She took the help of armed force from the Raja of Kotah and killed many Sansis and demolished the *chhatris* of their ancestors also. So the Sansis observe Hindu ceremonies at death. The ceremonies of Hindu Sansis are described here.

Death of a Child. Like other Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab, the Sansis bury a child if it dies before having its milk teeth which erupt in the fifth or sixth month. The child is bathed, clothed in

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new garments, wrapped in a coffin and carried to the cremation ground. In the case of very young babies no bier is used. If the child has teeth, it is cremated. If buried, no funeral rites are observed. At the time of taking away the dead body of the child, the mother says, 'I exempt you my milk that you have sucked'. By this declaration she means that the soul of the innocent child should not remain indebted to her in the next world. Some mothers feed crows and other birds with rice or *choori* for a month after the death of the child so that the child may get food in heaven. This proves that the Sansis have a strong Hindu belief in the transmigration of the soul.

Death of Adults. When the condition of the diseased or the dying person becomes very serious and hopeless, and death seems imminent, the closest relative puts the dying person on the ground. This relative is called *nagina*, who hands over that dying person to the god of death. According to this custom, one must breathe one's last on the ground, in the lap of mother earth. Then an earthen lamp with a lighted wick is placed on the hand of the dead. This is called *deeva vatti*. '*Deeva gull hona*' is a famous Punjabi proverb, which means, 'extinction of lamp' and it signifies the end of life, or death. So *deeva vatti* is thought to be the last light of the dying person on this earth. At the last breath of the deceased a heart-rending weeping, wailing, moaning and groaning of all the relatives begin. The women are in a very mournful and pitiable plight. They beat their breasts and pull their hair, remembering and shouting their love for, and qualities of, the dead person. One who has not seen such an incident before cannot bear the sight.

Gau Mansna. Sometimes another Hindu ceremony is performed before one's death, but only those who can afford the expense do it. When the person is in a serious condition, a cow is brought. Its tail is given in the hands of the dying and then it is donated to a Brahman. It is called *gau mansna* or *gaudan*. It is believed that, with the support of the cow's tail, the soul of the dead will cross the *bhawjal* or the ocean of sins and thus the soul will reach heaven.

If the dead person is a male then his wife, immediately after his death, puts away all her ornaments and beautiful clothes and wears old and ordinary ones. If she wears glass bangles or *vangan*, they are broken and if she wears silver or golden ornaments, they are put away but are kept in the house. Her hair is also let loose and they are kept unkempt for many days till the funeral rites are over. A coffin is prepared. At the time of death the eyes and mouth are properly closed. If, at the time of death,

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the dying person can speak, the following things are asked from him for the future use of the family :

1. What do you wish to be done in the family after your death ?
2. Do you owe anything to anybody, and if so, how much, and to whom ?
3. Does anybody owe anything to you, and if so, how much ?
4. Forgive all of us, if anything improper has ever happened.

After death, the body of the dead person is not kept within the house even for a moment. It is removed and placed in the court-yard or verandah of the house, which is covered with a white sheet of cloth. If the death takes place in the evening, the cremation is postponed to the next morning. A dead body is never cremated at night, and the Hindus believe that at night the ghost of the dead person gives great trouble to the carriers of the bier. If the dead body has to be kept at night in the house, a stick of exactly the same length of the corpse is cut. This stick is placed lengthwise alongside the dead body. The belief is that at night the dead body increases in size, and by this rite it does not attain any extra length. For this purpose the big toes of both feet are tied together. Nobody eats any food. The night is passed in lamentations. A very strict watch is kept over the corpse for the whole night to guard it against animals and also due to the superstition that if the toes are not tied, evil spirits may make their entry into the body.

In the morning the dead body is bathed by men in the case of a man, and by women in the case of a woman. Then some butter and a silver coin are put in the mouth of the dead. The bier is brought and when the dead body is carried out of the house, the covering sheet is raised. All the relatives and especially the females have a last look at the deceased. Four close relatives lift the bier on their shoulders by its four pegs at the corners. The funeral procession starts towards the cremation ground. Again a deluge of dirges rises. The women raise a great cry. The father, sons, brothers and other relatives utter loud lamentations *(dhahans)*. The dead body is carried to the cremation ground. The outer coverage or coffin is given to some village functionary. The corpse is placed in the pyre. The fire to light the pyre and some dry straws are taken from the house of the dead. The chief mourner takes several

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rounds round the pyre and lights it after every round and scorches the head and lips of the dead. Then all of them make a round of the pyre, and the pyre is set ablaze. Then all the mourners who join the funeral procession throw dry straws or some other small pieces of dry wood into the pyre and say, "Now you go ; our connection is broken with you". The men wash their hands and mouth and come back to the house. Then the women go out and after washing their hands and mouth they also come back to the house of the dead.

Death of an Old Person. The death of an old person, leaving a huge family of sons, daughters, grandsons and grand-daughters proves very expensive to the bereaved family. Though the loss is irreparable and painful, yet the family and other relatives do not mind much as they do at the death of a child or a young person. The dead body of an old person is carried to the cremation ground, decorated like a palanquin of a bridegroom or a bride. The bier is embellished with buntings, flowers, peacocks, horses and parrots made of coloured paper of different hues. The sons and the grandsons of the dead throw coins, *patashas*, *chhoharas*, *badams* and *makhanas* over the dead body. They believe that a person who lives a long life should not be lamented.

Death of Mother at Child-birth. If a woman dies at child-birth or if she dies in pregnancy, the spirit of the dead is certain to be harmful. This idea is harboured by almost all the tribes and castes of India, civilized or uncivilized, in one form or another. They think that the mother who dies in that condition, becomes a *churel* who haunts the house and causes great harm to the family and other people. If the mother dies just after giving birth to a dead child, the child is buried separately, near the cremation ground of the mother. But sometimes such a mother is not cremated like the one who dies of small-pox. A mother who dies while pregnant or at child-birth is feared and some means are adopted to disable her from coming back to the house as a *churel*. Some Hindus and Sikhs are seen driving iron nails into feet of such a corpse to render her unable to walk back to the house. In such cases the Sansis also adopt these methods. They put mustard grains in the eyes of the dead and they also pour mustard grains as a trail right from the house to the cremation ground in order to render her blind, as they believe that with such a measure she is rendered unable to find her way from the cremation ground to the house. At the time of

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departing from cremation ground, the child who is buried or burnt along with the pregnant mother, is addressed by his father, "Now you go. If you take birth again, take full birth." Similarly he addresses his wife and says, "Now you go and never come back to our house. I have severed my relationship with you".

Phul Chugne (Bone-picking). On the third day after the cremation, the unburnt bones of the dead are picked. Some relatives and the chief mourner go to the cremation ground. They take *kachchi lassi* with them and sprinkle it on the ashes of the pyre. This rite is also prevalent among all the Hindus and Sikhs all over India. By doing so they serve two purposes. If any cinder is still alive, it is extinguished. Secondly, by doing this they say that the soul of the departed one is pacified. The bones are put in a cloth or in a new earthen pot. They are brought, but are never put within the house. After some days they are taken to some running water, generally a river, and thrown into it. But the sooner it is done, the better, they think, it is. Some Sansis take the bones of the dead to Hardwar to throw them into the holy Ganges.

Thootha. *Thootha* means an earthen bowl. The ceremony of *thootha* is performed for children who eat solid food and for all adults, of both sexes. The Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab call it *tehrawan*, if it is performed after thirteen days and it is called *stahrwan* if performed after seventeen days. The Sansis do not have any time-restriction. They do it whenever they can afford, but generally they perform it within a month or so. On the day of *thootha* all the relatives gather in the house of the deceased. This ceremony is called *kath* in the case of an old person who dies leaving behind a large family. On the day of the *thootha* two and a half handfuls of rice are boiled for the rite of a child and five handfuls for an adult. A day before the *thootha* some sugar, ghee and rice are kept outside the house, usually in a pot which is hung from some tree. When the relatives gather the rice is put into a new cooking pot. A heap of dry cakes of cowdung is made *(ahrni)*. The rice of *thootha* must be cooked on the fire of dung-cakes. After putting rice and the required quantity of water, this cooking pot is put on the burning heap and then none can see or go towards it. When they think that the rice is cooked, both groups of men and women make a round of *thootha* (the cooking pot) and go out to give water to the soul of the dead just like the Hindus who give water to their *pitters* facing the sun or the east. After giving water which they call *paani dena*, they return home and all of them

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throw pieces of green herbage on the roof of the house of the deceased. When the men return home, they are allowed to enter the house only after the women give 'reverse water' *(puthe hath da pani)* to the dead. They face towards the house backing the returning men and throw water backwards from above their heads. After this a *babber* (a big piece of broken pot) is taken. Two men go to the *thootha* which is cooked by this time. They put some handfuls of cooked rice in the *babber*. Then they take a small new pitcherful of water. They take some sugar and ghee as well. Then taking all these things they go out of the village. They place the *babber* in a secluded place and mix ghee and sugar in the rice. Then they place near it the new pitcher full of water. They believe that the soul of the dead body is hovering nearby, waiting for the *thootha*. So leaving it alone, they get aside for a while. After fifteen or twenty minutes, they repair to the new pitcher and the *babber* because they think that the soul must have come and eaten its share of rice, ghee and sugar. They now sit and propitiate some rice invoking the names of Sansmal, Mahla, Beehdoo, Yaran, Baran and other ancestors and deities. The propitiated rice is thrown up in the air. They then eat the rest of the rice and come home, leaving the new pot and the *babber* behind. They are not to look behind at the pot and *babber* after leaving them.

When they reach home, the rest of the rice of *thootha* are propitiated by the mourners. They throw small quantities of rice on the roof in the name of the dead and the remainder is distributed among all the persons. Here another rite is observed. Some of the ghee used in *thootha* is preserved and is given to the womenfolk. The man who gives this ghee to them has also a comb in his hand. He applies some ghee to the comb and touches the hair on the head of every woman, one by one, with the comb upside down *(puthi kanghi)*. Then the food cooked for the assemblage is served to all of them and thus the rite of *thootha* is completed.

Kath. Literally *khat* or *kath* means a gathering. At no other rite of the dead is so much expenditure incurred as on the *kath*. Just like marriage, the *kath* is one of the causes of the indebtedness of many Sansis. This ceremony takes place on the death of old persons. All the relatives come. All the kith and kin of the deceased bring *laddaas* or the *chhat* (bags), full of grain. They also bring clothes and money for the host. As at marriage, very sumptuous food is served and there is a carousal too. On the third day the *neondra* is taken and all the guests give their due donations and a strict record is kept to return them to the donors on similar

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occasions in their families. The married daughters and sisters are given clothes and the sons-in-law are given turbans and money. This ceremony is called *pagg banahni*. In this way the *kath* ceremony ends with a beginning of new debt.

Funeral Ceremony of Sikh Sansis

The Sikh Sansis perform funeral ceremony like the other Sikhs. When a person is about to die his attention is drawn towards God and no worldly matters and sorrows are demonstrated before him so that nothing should intrude on his peaceful departure of soul. As soon as the soul has winged its flight, the dead body is bathed and clothed in new and clean clothes. Then it is removed to the funeral ground in any available and convenient manner, where the pyre is arranged. Weeping, wailing, crying and all other expressions of grief are strictly forbidden. As the funeral procession moves hymns from the *Guru Granth Sahib* are recited.

Arriving at the cremation ground the body is placed on the top of the pyre and more fuel is piled over. Then the general prayer is recited and blessings of God and the Gurus are invoked for the soul of the departed. Then the pyre is set on fire and the party of mourners returns, washes hands and face. The *karah prashad* is distributed among all the persons who are present there. The idea is that no grief should be shown at passing away of the soul from this earth, because it is a natural process just like birth and the summons of death should be received with sweet resignation. From the next day the reading of the *Guru Granth Sahib* is held by the heirs of the deceased till the tenth day. On this day all the relatives and friends come and with a final prayer for the soul of the departed the funeral ceremony comes to an end. The *kath* is performed in case where the deceased was a very aged person.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CRIMINAL TRIBES ACT AND THE SANSIS

"Alas ! how many causes that can plead well for themselves, in the courts of Westminster, and yet in the general court of the universe, and free soul of man, have no word to utter."

—CARLYLE.

THE ENGLISH RULERS of India framed the Criminal Tribes Act to prevent the crimes which were supposed to be committed by some groups or tribes. This act affected many tribes and the Sansis were one of them. Complete history and background of this Act is not given in detail anywhere by any writer and, therefore, a detailed study of its effect on its victims is very essential.

Thuggee. A study of the origin of the crime of Thugs and Pindaris is also essential as it preceded and consequently led to the formation of this Act. The origin of thuggee is shrouded in the obscurity of the past. According to Colonel Sleeman[1] it owed its origin to the vagrant tribes of Muslims which kept plundering India long after the invasions of India by the Mughals and the Tartars. Before the reign of Akbar[2] no record of the practice of thuggee is available. He seized some thugs who were put to death. According to the version of the English rulers, the English came to know of this practice very late and we read, "I believe it was unknown to the British government or authorities. In that year the disappearance of many army men proceeding to and from their homes induced the Commander-in-Chief to issue an order, warning the soldiers against the thugs. In 1812 after the murder of Lieut. Monsell by thugs, Mr. Halhead accompanied by a strong detachment proceeded to the villages where the murderers were known to reside and was resisted. The thugs were discovered to be occupying many villages in the Purgannahs of Sindous, and to have paid for generations, large sums annually to Sindia's

1 Taylor, C.M., *Confessions of a Thug*, p. xi. London, 1885.
2 ibid.

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Government for protection".[1] Most of the thugs were Mohammadans. The Hindu thugs comprised persons of various castes with a majority of Brahmins which is clear from a very long list of thugs given by W.H. Sleeman in the Report of Depredations committed by the thug gangs which were caught by Sleeman up to 1840 when thuggee was exterminated. As it has already been stated, the British learnt of the thugs at the end of 18th century. "There is reason to conclude that the British Government knew nothing of the thugs until shortly after the conquest of Seringapatam, in 1799 when about a hundred were apprehended in the vicinity of Bangalore."[2]

The gangs of thugs used to travel by roads in the disguise of merchants and ordinary travellers and used to strangle, plunder and kill innocent travellers on finding opportunity to commit this nefarious act. They had a strong religious belief in Kali Devi who is pleased with the sacrifice of human life. Hence they had no compunction to perpetrate this cruelty. Although the English claim ignorance of this type of crime before coming to India yet we find facts contrary to this claim: "War in Europe and the financial exhaustion that ensued, rendered it almost impossible for the maritime powers to put an effective check on the pirates either in the East or the West. With peace their numbers increased by the conversion of privateers-men into free booters. Slaves, privateers-men and pirates were almost interchangeable terms. At a time when every main road in England was beset by highwaymen, travelling by sea, seems not likely to escape a notice.....They passed themselves off as merchants or slaves, though their real character was well-known."[3] This shows that the practice of crime similar to that of thuggee in India existed in England in the medieval age, the period of Akbar the great, when the thugs were first apprehended and punished in India.

If we probe a bit deeper into the origin of thuggee, we find, "The origin of thuggee is shrouded in obscurity, but is said to have sprung from the Sagartii, who contributed 8,000 horses to Xerxes and are described by Herodotus in the VIIth book of his history. These people had a pastoral life; were originally of Persian descent and use that language; their dress is something betwixt the Persian and the Aryan; they have no offensive weapons either of iron or brass, except their daggers, their principal

1 ibid.
2 Thornton, E., *History and Practices of Thugs*, p. 2. London, 1837.
3 Biddulph, Colonel John, *The Pirates of Malabar*, p. ix. London, 1907.

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dependence in action is on cords made of twisted leather which they used in this manner: when they engage an enemy, they throw out these cords having a noose at the extremity; if they either entangle horse or man, they, without difficulty, put them to death".[1]

As the history of thuggee reveals, the thugs were first known in the vicinity of Delhi and so there is reason to believe that the descendants of Sagartii might have accompanied some Mohammadan invader of India and settled in the neighbourhood of Delhi. We find the earliest and accurate report of the mention of thuggee in the history of Firoz Shah, written in 1356 by Ziaud-din Barni, that about 1290 a thousand thugs were captured at Delhi, but the Sultan with misplaced clemency refused to sanction their execution. He shipped them off to Lakhnaut. We also read that the thugs afterwards gave great trouble and Bengal became a focus for the depredations of the practice of thuggee.

Another mention of thugs is found in the reign of Akbar and about 500 thugs were caught in Etawah district. After that in the reign of Shahjahan, the French traveller Thevenot, in 1666, writes, "Though the road I have been speaking of, from Delhi to Agra be tolerable, yet hath it many inconveniences. One may meet with tigers, panthers and lions upon it; and one had best, also have a care of robbers and above all thugs, not to suffer anybody to come near one upon the road. The cunningest robbers in the world are in that country".[2]

For strangulating their victims they were called *phansigars* which is more expressive than thugs. They did not only travel by roads in the guise of respectable merchants, but they also posed to be military and police men. Their leaders were called Naiks, Jamedars and Subedars, which is also a proof of their being descendants of the plunderers and soldiers of the Mohammadan invaders of India as these are the titles of military men given by the Muslim rulers.

It is rather difficult to write much on the crime of the thuggee, tackled by the English, because the literature written and the reports published were not available to the public, as such literature was strictly confined to the police officers and to the C.I.D. As a matter of fact most accurate and interesting facts about thuggee have not been published and they are still in manuscript form. "The story of the proceedings taken against the

1 Sleeman, Colonel James L., *Thugs or a Million Murders*, p. 19. London.
2 ibid., p. 20.

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thugs is told in the fullest official detail in five volumes of manuscript records preserved in the India Office, London."[1]

However, the English began to tackle the crime of thuggee after the conquest of Seringapatam in 1799 and their attention increased after the murder of Lieutenant Monsell committed by the thugs in 1812. But up to 1816 the British officers could not achieve success in the suppression of thugs as shown by an interesting and useful paper written by Dr. Sherwood.[2] By this time the thugs were rampant in almost all parts of India, particularly in Bundhelkhand.

In 1828 William Bentinck energetically took up the work of social reforms, land reforms and suppression of crime. Thuggee was at its zenith at this time. In 1829 special orders and full powers were given to Mr. F. C. Smith, Agent to the Governor-General in the Narbada Territories, to proceed against all thugs and to put down their associates with a strong hand. Major Sleeman whose name will always be remembered and associated with the suppression of the crime of thuggee in India was given a special appointment as his co-adjutor and assistant. The active operations of the thuggee and dacoity department covered a period of six years, and two thousand thugs were arrested. After the establishment of the 'Thuggee and Dacoity Department', the following circles of the operations were opened in India : 1. Agra ; 2. Belgaum ; (3) Elichpur ; (4) Hyderabad ; (5) Jubbulpore ; (6) Lucknow ; (7) Lahore ; and (8) Nagpur.

W. H. Sleeman was appointed at Jubbulpore from 1831 to 1837 for the suppression of thugs and he carried out his operations very successfully. The following official figures of the operations for 1831 to 1837, as recorded by Captain Reynolds[3], who was the General Superintendent of the department, will illustrate the achievements of the department :

Transported to Penang, etc.	...	1,059
Hanged	...	412
Imprisoned for life with hard labour	...	87
Imprisoned for default of security	...	21
Imprisoned for various penalties	...	69
Released after trial	...	32
Escaped from jail	...	11

1 Demetrius, C. Boulger, *Lord William Bentinck*, p. 68. Oxford, 1897.
2 Dr. Sherwood, "On the Murderers called Phansigars", *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. 13, 1820.
3 Taylor, C.M., *Confessions of a Thug*, p. xiv. London, 1885.

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Died in jail	...	36
Made approvers	...	483
Convicted but not sentenced	...	120
In jails at various places	...	936
Thugs at large in India	...	1,800
Total	...	5,066

It will be interesting to note that even before the formation of the Thuggee and Dacoity Department, a tribe known as Chhapperband was put under the restriction of Section 27 of Bombay Regulation XII of 1827 according to which their movements were restricted and the members of the tribe had, "... to attend roll-call three times a day on such days and of such place as may be from time to time decided by the District Superintendent of Police whether such roll-call be called by a Patel or Kulkarni".[1]

The names of two thug approvers, Feringeea and Amir Ali, can never be obliterated from the history of thuggee. They were the sole source of information and caused the arrests of thousands of thugs all over India. Afterwards many officers helped in the cause of the extermination of the practice of this crime. But the actual thuggee department, during its earliest years when its most difficult work was to be done, consisted of Captain W. H. Sleeman, Captain Reynolds, Mr. Wilson, Mr. McLeod, Lieut. Briggs, Lieut. Etwale, Captain Paton and a native officer Rustum Khan, each of whom was given a small cavalry and infantry escort.

The operations went on up to 1853 when thuggee was eradicated. W. H. Sleeman, the hero of the department wrote, "The system is destroyed, the profession is ruined; the guild is scattered, never again to be associated into a great corporate body. The craft and the mystery of thuggee will no longer be handed down from father to son".[2]

Pindaris. Out of Mohammadan thugs emerged the pindaris who proved a great menace to the country. The earliest mention of the pindaris occurs in 1689.[3] The thugs were the product of Muslim freebooters. They were not on the list of the regular soldiers of the Muslim invaders, but were generally kept and used for plunder and

1 Naidu, Paupa Rao, *Criminal Tribes of India*, Book III, p. 42. Madras, 1907.
2 Sleeman, Colonel James L., *Thugs or a Million Murders*, p. 124.
3 Scott, *Ferishta*, Vol. II, p. 121.

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pillage. Their main object was the acquisition of booty. Similarly, the pindaris were the plunderers, kept by the Marathas just for plunder and carnage. About the etymology of the word *pindari* it is admitted that it is derived from native intoxicant called *pinda* to which they were strongly addicted. Hence they were known as pindaris. The first leader of the pindaris, Ghazi-u-Deen, served under the first Baji Rau, and died when employed with a detatchment at Ojein. He had two sons, Gardee Khan and Shah Baz Khan, notorious and dangerous robbers. They pleased Malhar Rau Hulkar with their booty so much that he presented them with a golden flag called *zaree*. So the first man to encourage the pindaris was Malhar Rao Hulkar. After this the pindaris carried on their terrible devastations and depredations under different leaders who are enlisted below as given by Malcolm[1]: Ghazi-u-Deen, Gardee Khan, Lal Mohammed, Emam Buksh, Kauder Buksh, Tukoo, Bahadur Khan, Heera, Burrun, Wasil Mohammed, Jamedar Duble Khan, Chetoo, Mohammed Panah, Daood Khan, Kamer Khan, Yar Mohammed and Ameer Khan.

The pindaris were annihilated by 1870. In the above list, though the name of the pindari leader, Ameer Khan is last, yet in importance, it is not the least because his cruelty and the atrocities which he perpetrated throughout the length and breadth of India, can never be forgotten. But it is strange to read that he was made the Nawab of Tonk by the British Government. He was a native of Sambal, a village in the district of Muradabad (U. P.). He was son of a Mallah and he had one brother named Kareem. He left his home at the age of twenty and remained with the Peshwas, rather in equality with Jeswantrao Hulkar. Ameer Khan is remembered like Halakoo and Changez Khan having no compassionate feelings or any set principles of life.[2]

From this discussion it is clear that in the initial stages of their rule, the English had to face two groups of robbers—the thugs and the pindaris. By 1860, the suppression of these pirates was completed and there was perfect peace in the country.

After complete suppression of the thugs and the pindaris, the English paid their attention to nomadic and gypsy tribes roaming in India, who were no danger to the law and order of the country, as the thugs and the pindaris were. The official records prove that the thugs had their settled abodes and they used to go in

1 Malcom, Sir John, *A Memoir of Central India*, Vol. I, Chap. 10, "Rise, Progress and Annihilation of Pindaris", pp. 425-62. London, 1823.

2 ibid., pp. 341-43.

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gangs on expeditions, sometimes lasting for six months. After getting handsome booty, thugs used to return to their native place, to decide the rendezvous for the next adventure. But, as afterwards named, the criminal tribes of India were usually homeless people leading a nomadic life. These people mostly lived a pastoral life, but, as it is natural some of them used to prey on the property and cattle of the neighbouring people. Those who committed thefts and dacoities should have been dealt with under the common law of the land. The proper procedure was to settle the nomads and to make them good and useful citizens of India because they were just like an amputated organ of Indian society. But it is a great pity that the treatment given to them was the obnoxious Criminal Tribes Act.

Before the Criminal Tribes Act came into being, the British rulers dealt with the criminal tribes according to the Regulation XXVI of 1793. In the second phase they dealt with these people according to Act XXX of 1836, of the Thugee and Dacoity Department. In the third phase they were dealt with under the Indian Penal Code of 1860.

It was in the beginning of 1871 that the Criminal Tribes Act was debated in the Council. The debate was initiated by the report from the Superintendent of Operations of the Thuggee and Dacoity. The report was about the activities of the Meenas of the village of Shahjahanpur in the district of Gurgaon, Punjab. The report was read out in the Council by the Hon. Mr. T. V. Stephens, the then member for Law and Order.

On the ground of this report a huge number of tribes were put under the Criminal Tribes Act.

Then it was decided that the Act did not have any provision for separating the children from the parents. So the Act was amended in 1897, which provided for the separation of children between the ages of 4 to 18. Again the Indian Police Commission of 1902-03 asserted that special provision may be inserted in the Criminal Tribes Act to authorise the simple registration of notified criminal gangs and the taking of finger impressions of the adult male members where necessary. As a result of the recommendation of the Police Commission, a new Criminal Tribes Act was passed in 1911, which replaced the Act of 1871. The Criminal Tribes Act of 1911 empowered the Local Governments to declare a tribe to be a criminal tribe without regard to its settlement or means of livelihood. Again an amendment was made in 1919. The Criminal Tribes Act was again amended in 1923 and

finally the Act was known as the 'Criminal Tribes Act VI of 1924'. This Act remained in force up to 31st August 1952, when it was repealed.

Working of the Criminal Tribes Act

We cannot discuss and analyse the working of this Act in great detail for want of space. Below some essential points are dealt with :

Notification. Section III of the Act empowered the local Government to declare any tribe, gang or class of persons or a part thereof, as a criminal tribe, if it has some reasons to believe that they are addicted to the commission of non-bailable offences.

Registration. After the notification of a tribe as criminal, the District Magistrate was asked by the local Government to make a regular register of the members of the criminal tribes living within his jurisdiction. Then the District Magistrate used to call every member of the tribe concerned and ask each one to furnish the information required by him. Then finger-prints of the person were taken in the register, with full particulars. The members were registered according to the recommendation of the police. So members of the ex-criminal tribes were absolutely at the mercy of the village headman and the police authorities who always misused their powers to such an extent that as the author has seen, even blind persons were registered. The District Magistrate of the local Government used to order the registered member to report himself to the village headman or to the police at fixed intervals, which usually occurred at inconvenient hours like 11.00 p.m. and 3.00 a.m. The movements of a registered member were also restrained and he had to procure a pass from the police to cross the limits of his village. If ever he needed to go to some other village, he had to secure a pass in which he had to give the full particulars of his place of destination and on reaching there he had again to report to the authorities of that place. A breach of such a restriction used to be punished under section 22, imprisonment up to 3 years or a fine of Rs. 500/-. So this sort of restriction on the members of the ex-criminal tribes used to follow them from cradle to grave, everyday worsening their spirit of rebellion against cruelty and the State. The unwarranted restrictions, which were mercilessly misused, made them hardened criminals. The insistance on getting a pass and reporting oneself to the police *(hazri)* led the low-paid, untrained, and light-hearted policemen and village headman to take forced and free labour from

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them, wringing money from the poor and the needy people who had no other alternative than to get a pass and then go out of the limits of their villages. In many cases, the village headman or the police made wrong and unreasonable entries against innocent persons due to personal grudges or resentment. The bad reports prepared by the bad and dishonest men were submitted to the District Magistrate who sentenced them to life imprisonment in jails or life transportation. Before the Bombay Government's Enquiry Committee of 1939, Mr. Ravi Shanker Vyas stated, "If a policeman or a Patel wants people to bring fodder for cattle, he registers a few young Dharalas (A tribe of Kaira district) who would become his servants. If an innocent Dharla goes about the village with a hukka in his hand, it is regarded as an impertinence and an insult to the Patel, who gets him registered under this Act".[1] Similarly several cases had been deposed by respectable persons before the Madras Enquiry Committee in 1947.

In the Punjab, many members of the ex-criminal tribes died in life-long servitude to the village headmen. Sometimes the regular reporting to the police twice or thrice a day lasted for 10 to 15 years, without any actual offence having been committed. As a result of this cruelty, the innocent individuals got fed up with the unjust authorities and there were cases in which they actually became criminals. Sometimes the registered member was not marked present in the register out of grudge in spite of his being present and reporting himself to the village headman or to the policeman concerned. As a result, many people were heavily punished and imprisoned. The times, 11.00 p.m. and 3.00 a.m., for reporting were such as to compel some persons to sleep at the police station and some deaths also took place due to excessive cold. But, on the other hand, there were actual criminals who used to be marked present in spite of being absent at night even for several days together, because they shared their booty with the village headman or the police. Thus the innocent was made a criminal by the callous and unjust behaviour of the authorities immediately over them, while the real criminals were encouraged to commit more thefts, out of greed. As C. M. Lloyed Jones I.C.S. rightly replied to the questionnaire of the United Provinces Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee of 1947. "Declaring them a criminal tribe by birth affects morally their future generations as they know that as soon as they attain the age of 15, they would be registered, even if their character is not bad and they are not in-

1 Raghaviah, V., *Problems of Criminal Tribes*, p. 7. Delhi, 1949.

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clined to commit thefts, etc. It is the Act itself that makes them to think that they are thieves."[1]

Unjust Punishments and Sentences. Section 23 of the Criminal Tribes Act declared that any person belonging to the ex-criminal tribes convicted once for any offence under the Indian Penal Code specified in schedule first, if convicted of the same offence for the second time, will be punished with imprisonment for 10 or not less than seven years and on third or any subsequent conviction with transportation for life. This section contemplates further punishments also. Hence one is compelled to condemn the Criminal Tribes Act. The criminal must be punished by law without any consideration of caste, class or religion. But it was strange that a member of the criminal tribe who committed an offence was imprisoned for seven years or ten years or with life transportation whereas any other Indian not belonging to criminal tribes, was imprisoned for 3 or 6 months or even set free for the same offence. Therefore, the Criminal Tribes Act was completely an act of genocide on the criminal tribes of India.

Settlements of Criminals. Section 16 of the Criminal Tribes Act provides for the establishment of reformatories, educational and agricultural settlements for criminals and it empowered the local Government to place any tribe, a group or any individual in any type of criminal settlement. This could be done even for a man with his previous conviction. They were sent to the criminal settlements for not paying a fine of one rupee. In this punishment we also find, "I have seen persons rotting in settlements from birth to death. Even in regard to this matter the courts have no rights to intervene. Known principles of jurisprudence and enlightened sections of criminal justice have always required that punishment should be proportional to the offence committed".[2]

The greatest flaw in this procedure was that many innocent persons were sent to the criminal settlements and they came out of them as trained criminals, learning all undesirable habits and ways from hardened criminals in whose company they lived for many years. All psychologists, penologists, and criminologists admit that when the criminals are collected together they corrupt each other and become worse than ever at the termination of their punishment.

Section 17 (1) provided for the separation of a child from the parents or guardians and the child could be put in any school

1 *Report of the Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee*, p. 50. 1949.
2 Raghaviah, V., *Problems of Criminal Tribes*, p. 9.

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where the children of ex-criminal tribes were put. A psychologist can easily imagine the mental torture inflicted on the children and the parents by such punishment. We see parents sending away their children to the kindergarten schools but the affectionate and voluntary send-off does not affect filial love. But if their children were forcibly snatched from them then one can think of the mental agony of the parents and the psychological state of the children. There were examples when a school teacher just being displeased with the parents of children used to complain to the department of criminal tribes against the child and his parents. So some children, in spite of being good at studies and coming of good parents, were separated forcibly from the parents and sent to reformatory schools. The author saw one case in 1942 when he was also a student of 8th class. The case in question took place in the village of Gajiana Nau tehsil and district Sheikhupura, West Punjab. A boy of ten was caught by the police constables. One can never forget the entreaties and cries of the boy and his mother at the time of their forcible separation. It was a brutal act to send the boy away to the Amritsar Reformatory School. The real cause was that the parents of the boy could not please the teacher by bringing fuel for his domestic consumption and were unable to give him the wool of their sheep free. Hence the teacher became angry with them and he complained that the parents of the child were criminals and were reluctant to educate the child, so it would be better to separate the child from the parents. Consequently, it was done according to the wish of the teacher, just to wreak vengeance on them. Under such circumstances, neither the children can study properly nor can the parents become good and because of frustration the criminal tendency increases rather than decreasing. So such a compulsory separation of children from parents is held by psychologists and criminologists to be one of the basic causes of the crime. Mullins affirms that the second cause is "the denial of parental love in early life."[1] The famous criminologist Clarence Darow also supports this view, "Seldom one begins a criminal life as a full grown man. The origin of the typical criminal is an imperfect child."[2]

Something should be said about the criminal settlements also. They were found in almost all the provinces of India. The settlements of the adults used to be of three types—(1) Reforma-

1 Mullins, Claud, *Why Crime ?*, p. vi. London, 1945.
2 Darow, Clarence, *Crime—Its Causes and Treatment*, p. 48.

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tories, (2) Industrial settlements and (3) Agricultural settlements.

Procedure of Committing. When any member of the ex-criminal tribes committed some offence, he was challenged and punished according to the Criminal Tribes Act. After release, he used to be sent to the Amritsar Reformatory for five years if a settled criminal, and for ten years if a member of some nomadic tribe. Some of the Punjab criminal settlements were once managed by private and philanthropic societies, but for 25 or 30 years all of them had been managed by the Government. Up to the repeal of the Act there were a number of criminal settlements in the Punjab; they were mostly agricultural. There were also some forest settlements in the Punjab. They were situated in the dense forests in which the settlers spent lives cutting wood and labouring all the year round. Their confinement in the thickness of jungles, had a very adverse effect on the inhabitants. The basic point was to civilize the wandering tribes. But to intern them in the jungles under very harsh conditions only ruined them. Some of them were employed on monthly wages, while some used to get piece wages. This type of forest settlement was situated in the thickest jungle of the Punjab, Chhanga Manga, district Lahore.

There were two industrial settlements in the Punjab, Mughal Pura and Lyallpur. In the former the members of the ex-criminal tribes were employed in railway workshops, but in the latter they were engaged in industrial pursuits.

Amritsar Reformatory Settlement was the largest criminal settlement in the Punjab. It was under the charge of a Superintendent who was a first class Magistrate, having summary powers. After the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, it was converted into a Mental Hospital. It had two schools: (i) Reformatory school, and (ii) Settlement school. The settlement school was meant to give primary education to the children of the ex-criminal tribes whereas the reformatory school provided training in carpentry, tailoring, weaving, ban twisting, furniture polishing, manufature of leather goods, chicks, carpets, and making of sports material.

Borstel School at Mughalpura was situated near the Criminal Tribes Settlement at Mughalpura. This was meant for the orphans and juveniles of the de-notified tribes. After the completion of training, the boys were sent on probation to Burewala Reformatory.

Burewala Reformatory had two farms. One was the Borstel farm and the other was the Adult farm. They were situated at a

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distance of two miles from each other and were managed by two different Superintendents. The Adult farm had several quarters and a big cattle-shed and it was meant for the adult under-probation period. The Borstal farm was meant for the juveniles or probationers, sent and discharged from Mughalpura.

Besides these settlements, there were villages and colonies under the direct control of the Criminal Tribes Department, while some were under police surveillance. But the economic condition of the inhabitants of the colonies was very unsatisfactory due to many abuses. Their movements were restricted and so they could not find means of earning their livelihood anywhere else, outside the colonies.

Achievements of Settlements

There is no doubt that some criminals might have been improved or corrected, but most of them deteriorated under inhumane restrictions. From the industrial education, the criminals could not get any advantage after release, because they were not given any help by the Government, in the form of money, implements or equipments. The poor persons could not purchase what they required for their undertakings. So, naturally their learning was wasted. Another disgusting factor was that in spite of their being in a reformatory for many years as peaceful persons, the stigma of their being 'criminal' stained them more glaringly as people always doubted a person who had spent some time in a criminal reformatory. The land allotted to the de-notified tribes in the criminal settlements was of a very poor quality and usually it was unirrigated. The most deplorable thing about the schooling of the children of the then criminal tribes was that they were not educated beyond the primary standard, which rendered them something half way between the uneducated and the educated. There is not a single example of the British regime in India in which some intelligent student was selected for higher studies, educated and appointed in some respectable post. Their aim was simply to hoodwink the Indians that they were doing their utmost to reclaim the then criminal tribes of India.

Salvation Army and De-notified Tribes

Besides the Central and State Governments, some religious and philanthropic organisations also tried to reform the denotified

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tribes of India, but it is only the Salvation Army, a world-wide Christian Missionary organisation, which deserves mention. The workers and volunteers of the Salvation Army, first of all landed at Apollo Bundar, Bombay, on 19 September 1882. In India the Salvation Army is commonly known as 'Muketi Fauj'. They have doubtless the spirit of altruism, but more than this type of spirit, their mission was, and is, to spread Christianity, which, in addition to service to Christ, was a great help to the British empire in India. They did their work in almost all parts of India, but basically they were concerned with the work of proselytisation in which they succeeded to a great extent. We read, '.....we claim to have given a general impetus to Missionary work in India, and to have helped to bridge the gulf which divides India from Christ, from other feet besides our own'.[1] They worked for their religion among all the communities of India and even some educated persons of high castes embraced Christianity.

It was in 1908 when some officers of Salvation Army were touring in the United Provinces, that they visited Bareilly. There they held a congress and among the audience there was the Hon. Mr. Tweedy, the then Commissioner of Rohilkhand and a member of the Government of U.P. He was keenly interested in the welfare of the then criminal tribes and he spoke about them to the officers of the Salvation Army, feeling sure that Sir John P. Hewett, the then Lieut. Governor of U.P., would approve of the work the Salvation Army wished to do among the de-notified tribes. The Lieut. Governor agreed to the proposal and at Gorakhpur, about 300 Doms who were under the charge of police were entrusted to the Salvation Army. After this, the Salvation Army worked very enthusiastically for the reclamation of the denotified tribes in several parts of India and in 1922 they had the following settlements under their charge : [2]

Province	*Name of Settlement*	*No. of Settlers*
1. United Provinces	1. Gorakhpur	386
	2. Moradabad	813
	3. Kanth	140
	4. Bareilly	215
	5. Sahibgunj	172

1 Tucker, F. Booth, *Muketi Fauj or Salvation Army*, p. xiii.
2 ibid., pp. 216-17.

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Province	*Name of Settlement*	*No. of Settlers*
	6. Najibabad (from where Sultana Sansi, India's Robinhood escaped)	256
	7. Boys' Home	58
	8. Girls' Home	50
	9. Young children	40
	Total	2130
2. Punjab	1. Kot Adhian	601
	2. Chhanga Manga	222
	3. Kassowal	419
	Total	1242
3. Bengal	Saidpur	318
4. Bihar & Orissa	1. Chautarwa	305
	2. Angul	101
	3. Children's Home	37
		443
5. Madras	1. Sainyapuram	1107
	2. Satuartpuram	1783
	3. Guntur	219
	4. Perambur	217
	5. Pallavaram	231
	6. Boys' Home	58
	7. Girls' Home	50
	8. Children's Home	42
		3707

In India, in 1922, the total population of 24 criminal settlements under the charge of the Salvation Army was 7,840 and the tribes dealt with included the Sansis, Bhatus, Haburas, Nats, Karwals, Doms, Maghaoya Doms, Yerikulas, Veppur Parias and Kerachas.

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As the time rolled on, some workers of the Salvation Army became greedy and their religious zeal smothered their motive of service to humanity. Then the people objected to the activities of the Salvation Army and they demanded that the criminal settlements should not be managed by them. The criminal settlements under the charge of the Salvation Army began to be managed with a view of getting profit from them. The wages were also lower in the settlements than outside. There were many settlers who wanted that the settlements should go under the direct control of the Government. It was the Bombay Enquiry Committee of 1939 which made a systematic study of the working of the criminal settlements under the Christian Missionary Organization, and the Committee strongly condemned them on the ground of following findings[1] :

1. Scriptural instructions were compulsory in the schools.

2- Discrimination was shown by the Mission societies in favour of the Christian settlers as against non-Christians.

3. The Christian managers of the Hobli settlement were inspired by Christian zeal as one would find the Missionaries rather than in Government institutions, with Hindu and Mohammadan settlers.

4. The Mission societies had obviously an interest in propagating their faith. At Sholapur, a Christian, though he did not belong to the settlement, or free colony, was given a plot of land reserved for settlers. The Government managements would be more economical than voluntary agencies.

5. In Sholapur settlement, a pamphlet was published at a cost of Rs. 500/- and the cost was charged to settlement accounts when the sole purpose of the publication was Missionary propaganda.

6. Rs. 5,000/- in each of the years 1934 and 1935 were credited to the Mission accounts.

7. A regular annual contribution of Rs. 3,000/- was given to the American Mission as supervision charges by the Sholapur settlement, though it could not be settlement expenditure at all.

Moreover the Christian Missionaries began to convert young girls and to send them to distant places without the knoweldge of their parents or guardians.

In short, the Christian Missionaries became unpopular for zeal of religious propagation and for getting profits from the land,

1 Raghaviah, V., *Problems of Criminal Tribes*, pp. 10-11.

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labour and capital of the settlements and as a result the situation of the settlers became just like that of the Hawaian who said to a Christian Missionary, "When the white man came you had the Bible and we owned the land; now we have the Bible and you have the land."[1]

Hence all the settlements were put under the direct management of the Government. But it is unfair to deny the fact that in spite of loopholes, the Salvation Army did a lot of good to some of the members of the denotified tribes of India, and many families of the Sansi tribe living at Kot Adian, district Sheikhpura (West Punjab) were also benefited by the Missionaries of this organization.

Was the Criminal Tribes Act Justified?

The work of passing and enforcing legal Acts is not so simple as it sounds to most of the people. Now Penology has developed into a separate science. A great deal of thought is exercised before a crime is punished. But the Criminal Tribes Act was passed very light-heartedly. This Act was debated before the Governor-in-Council, in 1871, and at the time of its debate some members of the Council criticised, and objected to this Act. When the Act was severely criticised, Mr. T. V. Stephenes, the then member of the Law and Order, said in favour of the Bill, "The special feature of India is caste system. As it is, traders go by caste: a family of carpenters a century or five centuries hence, will be carpenters, if they last so long. Keeping this in mind, the meaning of professional criminals is clear. It means a tribe whose ancestors were criminals from times immemorial, who are themselves destined by the custom of caste to commit crime and whose descendants will be offenders against law, until the whole tribe is exterminated or accounted for in the manner of the thugs. When a man tells you that he is offender against law, he has been so from the beginning and will be so to the end; reform is impossible, for it is his trade, his caste, I may almost say, his religion to commit crime".[2]

In this long and unjust argument in favour of the justification of the Criminal Tribes Act, Mr. Stephenes was mistaken. His mistake lies in his blind belief in heredity which he thought to be the only cause of crime. No reasonable person can believe that a community as whole can be innocent or guilty. Every

1 *The Race Question in Modern Science*, p. 30. UNESCO, 1956.
2 *Report of the Criminal Tribes Enquiry Committee of U.P.*, p. 4, 1947.

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individual has a unique world of instincts, habits, and emotions. Therefore, the crime should have been dealt with individually. But to declare a whole tribe to be born criminal was absurd. Anyhow, the Act was passed by the Governor-in-Council and the Criminal Tribes Act began to crush its own product. Magaret Wilson who spent many years with her husband who was a prison Governor sagaciously wrote, "How can a community hurt a criminal it has created, which it has borne as truly as a mother bears a child?"[1]

As a matter of fact, there was no need for the Criminal Tribes Act, but the words of Mr. Stephenes evidently show that this Act was not passed only for curbing crime but it was also framed with the idea of exterminating millions of persons, innocent and guilty alike. Hence this Act was a sort of genocide.

Condition of Crime in England when the Criminal Tribes Act was framed in India

One may question, what was the condition of crime in England when this Act was framed in India? In 1886, when the Criminal Tribes Act was in its full force in India, the condition of England is clear from the following facts. "And now a few words concerning the criminal classes of India who also 'compare favourably' with those of more highly civilized countries, the proportion of criminals to entire population being small, and that of women quite insignificant. Without any desire to make invidious comparison, but to enable the readers to form some estimate, I propose to give the figures in India and England respectively. The average total of the prisoners in all the jails in India and Burma in 1886 was 76,676 (of whom only 2,906 were women), this, in a population of 254 millions, makes one prisoner to every 3,381 inhabitants. In England, so far as I could ascertain from official quarters and on a basis of the last census, there were in all jails in the same year about 22,000 persons (of whom about 3,200 were women), in a population of 26 million or one criminal in 1,180 inhabitants."[2] This shows that in 1886 proportionately on the basis of population in England there were about *three times* more prisoners than in India (Burma included). It is more interesting to note that, on the basis of population, proportionately there were 123 women criminals in the jails of

1 Wilson, Magaret, *Criminal and Punishment*, p. 309.
2 Samuelson, James, *India Past and Present, Historical, Social and Political*, p. 249, London, 1890.

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England for every 12 women criminal in jails in India.

The atrocities of the English robbers of Indian ocean are unforgettable. Not to speak of men even some English women became leaders of the plundering gangs, "..... the English women named Anne Bonny and Mary Read organized gangs, turned pirates and handled sword and pistol."[1] To know more about the criminals and the English pirates, one may again refer to Biddulph.[2] The English robbers had no compunction at all in ill-treating the Asiatics, "..... the fact is that piracy was looked upon more leniently than we should now regard".[3]

The pirates were dealt with under an Act passed in the reign of Henry VIII, the Lord Admiral and his lieutenant or his Commissary had been empowered to try pirates; but the system had long fallen into abeyance. So an Act to try the pirates was again passed for seven years, but in 1706 it was reviewed for seven years more and in 1714, for five years more. Thus the piracy was suppressed. If the English thought it proper to suppress the English robbers punishing them individually or framing some Act temporarily, they could have easily suppressed the Indian robbers also in the same manner without stigmatising the communities as a whole as criminal tribes and without framing the Criminal Tribes Act permanently in the Indian Law.

Partial Treatment of Criminals

Another question arises whether the criminals were dealt with alike or only the poor and homeless ex-criminal tribes were the target of attack. In this respect the makers of Criminal Tribes Act again fell short of justice. About Amir Khan, the tyrant leader of the pindaris, something has already been said. He was really a brutal person, but he had great power and the English were skilled in using such men. The opinion of Sir John Malcolm on Amir Khan cannot be false as he was contemporary and he had personally dealt with him. He writes : "Though Sewai Singh, the author of a war which brought ruin on his country, may be considered to have merited his fate, that fact in no degree extenuates the deep guilt of Amir Khan, who evinced on this occasion that he was alike destitute of humanity and principle."[4]

1 Biddulph, Col. John, *The Pirates of Malabar*, p. xii. London, 1907.
2 ibid., pp. viii, xii and 36.
3 ibid., p. 57.
4 Malcom, Sir John, *A Memoir of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 337, London, 1823.

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Again we read, "After this success which was very complete, Amir Khan was expected at Jeypore, the inhabitants of which were thrown into great consternation; but on this, as on many other occasions, he shewed that he was only a leader of free-booters."[1]

In spite of this, the English never bothered about him though he was the greatest criminal and robber of his time in India. The British rewarded him and his son Vazir Mohammed Khan. The history bears it out in the words that "in accordance with this agreement the districts of Deronge, Perava and Gogla-Nemahera were confined in the possession of Amir Khan and his hereditary descendants for ever. The fortress of Tonk Rampura with the territories subordinate to it was added to his dominions, as special grant of favour. The British government was also pleased to grant him a sum of Rs. 3,00,000 in cash and the district of Palwal was also granted to the son of Amir Khan as a life-estate, to cover the expenses of his maintenance."[2] After the death of Amir Khan, the British rewarded his son and history speaks for itself, "Amir Khan breathed his last in 1834, his eldest son Vazir Mohammed Khan ascended the gadi of Tonk after him. The loyal Nawab rendered yeoman service to the British government in their adversity at the time of the great mutiny in 1857. For this attachment to the British Crown, he received from them a Sanad of adoption, authorising all rulers of Tonk who had no issue to adopt heirs to the throne in accordance with the Koran and without the payment of any nazrana."[3] It proves that to serve their own interest even a criminal like Amir Khan who undermined, attacked and impeached his own mother-land and her inhabitants, was considered most faithful and loyal to the Crown, as uniting with them, he helped them against his own country, in the War of Independence of 1857. They rewarded him with Jagirs, Estates, high ranks, Sanads and Titles, but millions of innocent souls were stamped as born criminals with a stroke of the pen. The Criminal Tribes Act was a punishment only for poor people. Its effect was not the same on all the communities put under it. Its impact depended on the economic and political status of the tribes put under it. For instance a section of the Dhillon[4] Jats of the

1 ibid., p. 334.
2 Mehta, M.N., *The Hind Rajasthan*, p. 382, Baroda, 1896.
3 ibid., pp. 383, 384.
4 *Report of the Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee*, p. 23, 1949. See also report by Hari Kishan Kaul and Tomkins and G.W. Catyer Lecture, on some Criminal Tribes, p. 101, 1910.

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Punjab is also one of the de-notified tribes of Punjab, but, having a good economic and political condition, their community as a whole never suffered from this Act as the Sansis and other allied tribes did.

The Criminal Tribes Act was absolutely inhumane as it injured and degraded the personality of a human being. It is a pity that the Criminal Tribes Act made the ex-criminal tribes both outlaws and outcastes and that is why it was said, "Quite apart from criminals as such, and quite apart from, though included among the untouchables are so called 'Criminal Tribes of India, numbering considerably over a million. They really present a most interesting ethnological problem and are deserving of much study before an improving and humane government develops them into a general mass of low-caste men."[1]

Another view of the justification of Criminal Tribes Act was held by some people that without harsh measures they could not be improved. Some English officers were so reckless that they even denied reformatory measures to them and we read, "The Chenchus cannot be reformed, until they had been taught the primary lesson that crime does not pay. To open schools and offer cooperation to the Chenchus in their present temper was in the words of the District Magistrate like offering chicken bones to tiger."[2]

It is not correct that de-notified tribes could be reclaimed only by putting them under the inhumane restrictions of the Criminal Tribes Act. There are the examples of some noble Englishmen who not only reclaimed them with sympathetic approach, instruction and education but also made noble men out of the stuff of common ex-criminal tribes.

One of the instances in the history of India is that of Lieutenant James Outram. The Bhils of Khandesh were thought to be the more fierce, unprincipled, predatory and dangerous people who always plundered and preyed upon the neighbouring territories and then disappeared in the thick of jungles. The first man who thought of canalising their energy and organising their Military Corps, as early as 1818, was Mountstuart Elphinstone, the then Governor of Bombay. But the suggestion was opposed and Captain Briggs wrote, "but a more close and intimate knowledge of their habits, has induced me to think that any Military organisation of the Bhils, would be at best difficult

1 Mackmunn, Sir George, *The Underworld of India*, p. 128.
2 Edwardes, S.M., *Crime in India*, p. 106. London, 1924.

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that it will be elevating them from thieves to soldiers, for which in my mind they are wholly incapacitated....." It was Lieut. James Outram, who took up this difficult job of elevating thieves to soldiers and he began his work in 1825, with the recruitment of five Bhils whom he selected from his captives. By and by the time came that he prepared a full battalion of Bhils and the Bhils Corps of Khandesh. The optimistic prediction and patience of Outram will remain on the pages of history for ever. Mr. Brigg's pessimism and the wonderful achievement of Lieut. James Outram are epitomised in the remarks, "the Bhils had been and to be regarded, not as mere criminals, but as creatures without human feelings, as dangerous as wild beasts, and noxious vermins from whom no good can be hoped. It was the desire and was considered the duty of all good citizens to hunt them, to trap them and destroy them at sight. Even the foreseeing Captain Briggs despised of reaching them and it was left for Outram to show that they were not only the human beings, but also useful members of society."[1] We read again, "But every report from 1857 onwards shows how Bhagoji misguided the Satmala Bhils. They stood firm by the government which had protected them and refused either to join the rebels or to harbour them."[2] It is a pity that the foreign rulers used the Bhils in 1857 for their protection, but after serving their purpose they disorganised and abolished their corps.

Similarly the lives of William Barnwell Booth, the founder of Salvation Army and his successor, F. Booth Tucker, are full of facts how they reclaimed thousands of so called incorrigible persons by winning their love and confidence by service and sympathy. Again to refer to James Outram, there was a time when he was suspected by his captive soldiers. So one day he slept under their guard, giving them arms and thus winning their confidence he did accomplish the uphill task which today the history remembers in the words, "It was only Outram who could do it."[3]

Mr. Edvin Sheard was a well-known worker of Salvation Army. He was sent along with his wife, to the Andaman Islands as in-charge of Sansi gangsters who were tried for committing three hundred robberies, for plundering property of lacs of rupees and for killing more than 50 men in the foothills of the

1 Simcox, A.H.A., *Khandesh Bhil Corps, 1825 to 1891*, Bombay, 1912.
2 ibid., p. 266.
3 ibid.

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Himalayas. Eight of the gang were sentenced to death and one hundred and twenty to transportation of life. As a forlorn hope the government decided to send them with their wives and children to Andaman Islands under the reformatory measure of the Salvation Army. Mr Sheard wanted to reform them with the stamp of his noble personality, sympathy and love but before taking their charge, Edvin Sheard was addressed, "There you are in charge of the new settlement up jungle". A brazen police officer stood talking to a fair-haired, pleasant-faced Salvation Army Officer and his wife, "That is so".

"Then I strongly advise you to sleep with a revolver under your pillow." The officer just smiled in reply. The fact was that he had no revolver and was not accustomed to having one. He preferred to gain his way by trust and kindness though he quite realised there were real risks attached to that way of working. He really turned them into peace-loving, hard working, faithful and respectable citizens and, "Five years after when Sheard and his wife said good bye, the atmosphere of the colony was not unlike that of any peaceful English village."[1] Hatred can never win love and confidence but it is only love that always wins them. The Criminal Tribes Act had no human justification in this respect. We must be in favour of duly punishing the criminals, under certain circumstances, but the law should not crush the innocent and the guilty alike. But alas ! this kind of indiscriminate crushing was done by the Criminal Tribes Act.

Opinions of Some Eminent Persons on the Criminal Tribes Act

The Criminal Tribes Act remained in effect for 82 years in India. Seeing its baneful effect on the ex-criminal tribes, several eminent men demanded its complete repeal. Among them was the late Jawaharlal Nehru, who had stated in his speech at Nellore (Andhra) on 18 October 1936, "I am aware of this monstrous provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act which constitutes a negation of civil liberty. Wide publicity should be given to its working and an attempt made to have the Act removed from the statute book. No tribe could be classed as criminal as such and the whole principle is out of consonance with all civilized principles of criminal justice and treatment of offenders."[2]

1 Coutts, F.L., *He had no Revolver*, p. 10. London, 1951.
2 Raghaviah, V., *Problems of Criminal Tribes*, p. 13.

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So after the Indian Independence, this Act was repealed on 31 August, 1952.

The Sansis under the Criminal Tribes Act

The Criminal Tribes Act was as vague as it was venomous. According to it all the wandering tribes, whether they committed any crime or not, would be placed under it. There were some criminals among the Sansis as they are in all communities, but large majority of this tribe was innocent and this was so in the case of many other tribes which were put under the Criminal Tribes Act. Before this Act, there was no justice for the innocent as the criminal was not only the defaulter himself, but the whole of his tribe was branded as criminal. So along with many others, the Sansis of the Punjab were also included in the list of the tribes which were put under this Act in 1871. But we find that even much earlier than this "in 1856 a circular had been issued in the Punjab making the Sansis, the Bauriahs and two other tribes amenable to a system of roll call. This was extended to Minas by executive orders and was enforced for some years, although as it afterwards appeared, it lacked any legal authority."[1]

The main cause of the inclusion of the Sansis of the Punjab, in the criminal tribes was, as written by English officers, a suspicion about them of having alliance with the Mazahbi thugs of the Punjab as it was the Mazahbis of the Punjab who defamed the Punjabis in the practice of thuggee, but this suspicion was false as we read, "According to an anonymous writer, the Sansis were suspected, just after the annexation of the Punjab, of being affiliated to the Mazahbi thugs, but the fact was never proved."[2] We again read about the Sansis, "Still though the whole of the caste is open to suspicion of petty pilfering, they are by no means always professional thieves."[3]

As a matter of fact, the Sansis and the Mazahbis could never be mistaken, one for the other because the English clearly knew that "The Sikh Sansis wear the Kes, but do not enrol themselves among the Mazahbis."[4] On the other hand, "Mazahbi means

1 Curry, J.C., *The Indian Police*, p. 241.
2 *Punjab Notes and Queries*, II, para 598.
3 Rose, H.A., *Tribes and Castes of Punjab*, Vol. III, p. 363. See also *Census Report of Punjab, 1881*, Part VI, p. 311.
4 ibid., p. 62.

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nothing more than a member of a scavenger class converted to Sikhism."[1]

As it has already been mentioned it was Major Hervey, the General Superintendent of the Operations of Suppression of Thuggee and Dacoity Department, who wrote the report on the Meenas of Shahjahanpur, which became the foundation stone of the Criminal Tribes Act, and we find from his own report that in 1860, 21 thugs were committed in the court of the Commissioner for Lahore, but none of them was a Sansi. So it is true that most of the criminal tribes were being punished for the fault of a few who were actual criminals. The report of Major Hervey states, "In the Punjab moreover (as elsewhere), the crime is not confined, like that of thuggee to any particular class; nor does it appear to be practised by any association expressly organised for this purpose. The persons who have been convicted were of mixed classes, unconnected with each other—Punjabees, Hindusthanees, Hillmen, Mohammadans, Faquirs, Brahmans, Mazahbis, Chuhras, who have committed it singly or in the smallest isolated parties, profession as applied to the criminals has a peculiar meaning to these perpetrators of crime that may not be given, when it is not distinctly, their hereditary vocation".[2]

While studying the little available literature on the Sansis, it is found that up to 1881, the Sansis were declared a criminal tribe in all the districts of Punjab.

The Punjab police proved so ruthless as to make some tribes amenable to a system of role-call as early as 1856, 16 years before the Act was imposed. After this Act was passed, the police mercilessly oppressed the criminal tribes. Taravaskis wrote, "From time to time attempts were made to check the activities of these gangs, but it was only when Sir Michael O'Dwayer became Lieutenant Governor, a thorough investigation was made into their mode of life. He was determined to wean them from their criminal instincts, and his policy was given effect to in the Criminal Tribes Act."[3]

The merciless attitude of Sir Michael O'Dwayer towards Indians is self-evident from the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh, as described by Harniman.[4] Hence one can easily understand

1 ibid., p. 75.
2 Hervey, Major, *Report of the Operations on the Thugee and Dacoity Department during 1859-1860*, No. 566 of 1861, p. 5.
3 Travaskis, Hugh Kennedy, *The Punjab of Today*, Vol. II, p. 288.
4 Harniman, B.G., *Amritsar and our Duty to India*, pp. 119, 120.

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what cruel type of treatment would have been faced by the criminal tribes of Punjab under that British officer who was the then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab.

Some of the English authors held that the Sansis could never work and earn an honest livelihood, but on the other hand it is found, "When the people of this Class have settled down and been able to earn a sufficient living, they have become decent members of society."[1]

W.H. Sleeman[2] gives a very long list of the names of convicts of 101 castes whose members were apprehended as thugs, but there is not even a single criminal whose caste, sub-caste or tribe is entered as Sansi. Therefore, it proves that the members of the Sansi tribe and like them, the members of many other tribes, were put under the Criminal Tribes Act, just on the basis of birth and without making any allowance or distinction for their real character.

The people were generally suspicious of the conduct of Sansis as they were stigmatised as born criminals. The people did not engage them in any employment nor was the government prepared to employ them in any respectable service. Restriction on their movements proved very detrimental to them in earning a livelihood, as they could not go anywhere on their own will to seek better opportunities of employment. Some of the sections and restrictions of the Criminal Tribes Act were so destructive that the members of the ex-criminal tribes were bound to become criminals because they could not get any facility, civil liberty or justice.

Repeal of Criminal Tribes Act and Sansis

It has already been stated in the preceding chapter that apart from the actual sufferers, even some eminent leaders, policemen, publicmen, judges, magistrates, lawyers, sociologists and penologists too began to speak against this obnoxious Act. Especially the self-respecting members of the ex-criminal tribes raised their voice against it during the British regime. But all appeals, opinions, representations and resolutions did not cut any ice with the foreign rulers. During the British rule, several Enquiry Committees were formed in different provinces to study the criminal

1 Curry, J.C., *Indian Police*, p. 241. London, 1932.

2 Sleeman, W. H., *Report on the Depredations committed by the Thug Gangs*, pp. 454-550, Calcutta, 1840.

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tribes, the impact of Criminal Tribes Act on them and the validity of its repeal or for necessary modifications in it. In spite of it, the Criminal Tribes Act remained intact.

On 15 August 1947, the masses of India became free but the ex-criminal tribes were still in the clutches of the Criminal Tribes Act. It was creditable on the part of the Government of Madras that it abolished the Criminal Tribes Act in 1948 and its operations were suspended even before, in 1946. The Government freed several tribes from the operations of this Act as early as 1938, and in 1948 the Act was abolished. The U. P. Government Enquiry Committee of 1947 concluded that the advantage lay now in the repeal of the Act rather than in its retention. The consequence of repeal was the denotification of all the tribes and the removal of restrictions on every member.

In 1949, the Government of India appointed an Enquiry Committee to decide whether the Act should be repealed or not. They toured all over India, met a number of distinguished persons and they observed and also discussed the problem with members of the then criminal tribes. The Committee had Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar as Chairman, Shri P. C. Dave, Shri Venkatesh Narayan Tivary, Shri J. K. Biswas, Shri Gurbachan Singh, Shri A. V. Thakkar and Shri Chaliha as members.

In addition to their tour in all the provinces of India, they sent a questionnaire of 15 queries to important persons of different parts of the country.

Many persons replied to the questionnaire from the Punjab and the Committee also met in the Punjab 22 persons including D.I.G.s, I. G. of Police and C.I.D.s to get their views on the issue. The Committee also interviewed different delegations of the criminal tribes in different provinces of the country. In the Punjab, two separate Sansi delegations interviewed the Enquiry Committee and appealed to it for the repeal of the Act and craved for an honourable living.

After a long consideration of the recommendations of "The Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee 1949-50", the Central Government decided on 6 March, 1952, and finally repealed this Act on 31 August 1952 with The Criminal Tribes Laws (Repeal) Act, 1952, No. XXIV of 1952.

The repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act had a very favourable effect on all the ex-criminal tribes of India. Since 1793 they did not feel free in this country, and after 1871 they were worse than encaged and wing-clipped birds, mercilessly restricted to their nests.

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The de-notified tribes were shorn of freedom, agonised by their ever-increasing poverty, ignorance, demoralisation and degradation. So they could not be what they ought to be. This is impossible without proper freedom as, for every man, to have freedom is only to have that which is absolutely necessary to enable him to be what he ought to be and to possess what he ought to possess.

Several public men of India struggled hard during the British regime to get the Criminal Tribes Act repealed but in this regard the name of Master Prabhu Diyal, a social worker, towers above all. He was born at Panna in Madhya Pradesh in 1901. He took a pledge on 29 October, 1929 to remain bare-footed till the then criminal tribes of India were freed from the clutches of this Act. He had been exclusively working for the social uplift of the Sansis and worked and lived in the Sansi colony, Andha Mughal, Sabzi Mandi, Delhi. He actually remained bare-footed for 23 years till the 19 November, 1952, the day when Mahatma Vinoba Bhave presented him a pair of chappals and he was assured by distinguished authorities of the Indian Government that they had decided to repeal the Act. He died in the service of these people on 20 February, 1964.

Today the Sansis are free and respectable citizens of India, having all the rights and responsibilities like any other citizen. Now they can go anywhere, live anywhere, do anything for improving themselves and their children. Now they will transmit to their children a freedom which is the indispensable requisite for the proper and full development of a nation.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND DE-NOTIFIED TRIBES INCLUDING SANSIS

"That is the most perfect Government under which a wrong to the humblest is an affront to all."

—SOLON.

NO EXCLUSIVE DATA regarding the uplift of Sansis in free India, are available and we can, therefore, only examine the schemes undertaken by the Government of India for the uplift of all the de-notified tribes, and the Sansis being one of the foremost of them are also being benefited by them.

The amount of money spent by the Government in the first five-year Plan (1951 to 1956) on the welfare schemes of the de-notified tribes in different provinces of India is shown in Table A, facing page 268.

The figures are collective for all the de-notified tribes found in respective provinces, and have been taken from the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Part I, 1955.

The expenditure sanctioned for schemes in the second five-year Plan, split up State-wise is shown in Table B facing page 269.

Regarding the ex-criminal tribes of India, we can also examine at a glance the scheme-wise total respective expenditures of the first and the second five-year Plans as given below:—

Sl. No.	The name of the scheme	Total expenditure for the first five-year Plan	Total expenditure for the second five-year Plan
1	2	3	4
1.	Education	20,99,407	58,22,300
2.	Agriculture	10,82,717	44,87,000
3.	Cottage Industries	13,39,588	22,54,000
4.	Medical and Public Health	6,27,772	10,97,200
5.	Housing	13,92,712	14,45,000
6.	Communications	27,795	...

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1	2	3	4
7.	Cooperation	1,23,064	2,13,000
8.	Forest	...	...
9.	Veterinary	35,642	...
10.	Publicity	16,959	...
11.	Community Centres	15,476	5,94,000
12.	Aid to Voluntary Agencies	2,53,922	7,28,000
13.	Administration	17,77,202	1,56,000
14.	Rehabilitation	8,65,867	27,79,500
15.	Miscellaneous	3,20,430	25,80,000
	Total	99,78,553	2,21,56,000

We see from the above table that the expenditure proposed in the second plan period has exceeded the expenditure of the first plan period by Rs. 1,27,77,447, or, in other words, it has become more than double. It is very encouraging that the National Government is realising its duty to uplift and assimilate these people and if the hard-earned money of the nation is spent honestly on the welfare schemes, the time is not distant when the ex-criminal tribes will be able to hold their own against any one else.

Now it is proper to study the present state of affairs of the welfare schemes in action for the ex-criminal tribes of the Punjab. Exclusive figures for the Sansis are difficult to get but whatever information could be gathered is given below :—

Before 1 November, 1956, the day of the reorganisation of States, the welfare work for these people was done separately by the States of Punjab and Pepsu, but now after their merger, there exists only one welfare department for these people. In the second five-year Plan Rs. 202 lakhs were sanctioned for the welfare of the scheduled castes and backward classes and the de-notified tribes of the Punjab. The Punjab Government's Welfare department split up the total budget of Rs. 202 lakhs, for the first three years of the plan as given in the Table on the next page.

Scheme No. 9, subsidy for construction of new houses is also being implemented in the second five-year Plan. Rs. 6.00 lakhs have been earmarked for this purpose. In the year 1956-57, 196 persons of the ex-criminal tribes were given subsidy for the construction of houses, in whole of the Punjab. Every grantee was given Rs. 600 for the construction of a new house, on the line of the model colonies and it was planned that the subsidies to 199 persons will be given for this purpose in 1957-58. In 1958-59,

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Name of the scheme	Cost of the scheme for the Plan	Amount provided during		
		1956-57	1957-58	1958-59
		(Rupees in lakhs)		
1. Removal of social disabilities, award of scholarships and reimbursement of fees to students.	145.67	27.75	29.48	29.48
2. Digging of new water wells and repairs to old ones and construction of bath-rooms for women	6.50	1.55	1.43	1.46
3. Subsidy for new homes	15.50	2.40	3.27	3.27
4. Community centres	10.25	0.84	1.52	2.07
5. Technical education	6.80	0.95	1.45	1.55
6. Publicity	2.70	0.71	0.62	0.62
7. Loans to backward youths	3.00	0.30	0.67	0.77
8. Training in mills, etc. on apprenticeship basis	1.90	0.38	0.38	0.46
Welfare of De-notified tribes :—				
9. Subsidy for new houses	6.00	1.18	1.20	1.20
10. Subsidy for seed, agricultural implements, bullocks, etc.	0.75	0.15	0.15	0.15
11. Training in mills, etc.	0.45	0.09	0.09	0.11
12. Nurse *dais*	0.20	0.04	0.04	0.04
13. Award of scholarships	1.83	0.30	0.37	0.37
14. Loans for setting in trades learnt	0.45	0.09	0.09	0.12
Total	202.00	36.73	40.76	41.67

the same target of the construction of 199 model houses was expected to be achieved. In Scheme No. 10 a provision of Rs. 75,000 has been made for the second five-year Plan and Rs. 15,000 has been earmarked for each year. This scheme provides subsidy to a number of ex-criminal tribes at the rate of Rs. 10 to 80 for the purchase of seed, agricultural implements and bullocks, etc. It is proposed that every year 450 persons of ex-criminal tribes will be given subsidy. According to the report of

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TABLE A

STATE-WISE EXPENDITURE INCURRED ON THE SCHEMES FOR THE WELFARE OF THE DE-NOTIFIED TRIBES IN THE FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN.
R.E.M. INDICATES REMAINING EXPENDITURE MISCELLANEOUS

Name of State	*Total population of denotified tribes*	*Percentage of their total population to the total population of the state*	*Total Expenditure*	*Administration*	*Education*	*Rehabilitation*	*Housing*	*Agriculture*	*Aid to Voluntary Agencies*	*Cottage Industries*	*Cooperation*	*Health*	*Miscellaneous*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Andhra	2,02,242	0.98%	7,49,865	(Details of other items of expenditure not supplied to the Central Govt. by the State Govt.)									
Bihar	13,311	0.03%	—	—	—	39,296	26,000	4,887	51,406	18,000	—	—	R.E.M.
Bombay	62,23,809	1.73%	—	—	7,15,276	—	2,37,255	1,72,170	—	3,08,751	1,03,892	—	96,857
Orissa	74,762	0.51%	4,66,669	—	23,574	—	1,63,000	1,74,366	—	20,400	—	21,900	R.E.M.
Punjab	76,564	0.60½%	—	—	1,12,444	—	19,800	(Remaining expenditure incurred on Agriculture, Health and Cooperation)					
Uttar Pradesh	16,68,845	2.64%	38,74,215	15,68,200	1,20,358	6,43,500	2,50,000	1,67,662	—	8,04,495	—	3,20,000	R.E.M.
West Bengal	2,598	0.01%	(A sum of Rs. 1,00,666 was spent on their various welfare schemes.)										
Hyderabad	69,202	0.37%	3,75,280	—	1,74,934	—	51,240	—	43,200	41,732	—	41,732	R.E.M.
Madhya Bharat	76,722	0.96%	4,13,019	—	1,15,456	—	—	—	—	33,920	—	1,10,231	R.E.M.
Mysore	2,10,321	2.13%	3,28,247	—	—	—	1,57,951	64,930	—	37,100	—	—	R.E.M.
Pepsu	3,453	0.98%	(Total expenditure for the first five year plan was 1,30,600 in 1955-56, Rs. 1,00,000 were spent to construct three Colonies, of 100 families each and besides it, 153 other families were benefited by this scheme.)										
Rajasthan	55,440	0.43%	7,27,455	—	1,75,823	—	—	2,88,508	1,23,530	—	—	—	R.E.M.
Saurashtra	2,302	0.05%	1,95,550	—	31,400	1,21,200	—	—	—	—	—	—	R.E.M.
Ajmer	1,152	0.16½%	(Rs. 17,287 were spent on veterinary service and Rs. 15,000 on publicity, cooperation & Community Centres).										
Bhopal	1,500	0.18%	26,170	—	12,427	—	2,210	—	—	—	—	3,990	R.E.M.
Kutch	500	0.09%	29,554	—	11,354	2,100	10,000	4,600	—	1,500	—	—	R.E.M.
Vindhya Pradesh	983	0.03%	1,38,459	—	48,500	—	—	7,80,000	(Rs. 11,959 were spent on publicity)				R.E.M.

For Tripura, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Coorg, Travancore, Cochin, Madras, Madhya Pradesh and Assam, the figures of the expenditure on the de-notified tribes were not available.

In the second five year plan (1957-61), the Welfare schemes for the de-notified tribes were undertaken, whose state-wise respective expenditures on eleven different items are given in the next table and the figures show 'lacs of rupees'.

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TABLE B

SCHEMES AND EXPENDITURE PROVIDED FOR SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN (1957-1961) FOR UPLIFT OF DE-NOTIFIED TRIBES OF INDIA.*

Sl. No.	*Name of the State*	*Education*	*Agriculture*	*Cottage Industries*	*Medical and Public Health*	*Housing*	*Cooperation*	*Community Centres*	*Aid to Voluntary Agencies*	*Administration*	*Rehabilitation*	*Miscellaneous*	*Total*
1.	Andhra	—	—	—	2.43	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.57	10.00
2.	Assam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3.	Bihar	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.30	7.30
4.	Bombay	5.05	—	1.50	1.49	—	—	—	0.23	—	—	—	8.27
5.	Madras	35.96	27.19	14.53	2.03	5.00	0.40	—	—	—	—	0.96	86.07
6.	Orissa	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.60	6.60
7.	Punjab	2.00	1.00	—	0.20	4.00	—	—	—	—	—	1.57	8.77
8.	Uttar Pradesh	1.50	13.00	—	2.50	—	—	—	—	—	5.00	—	22.00
9.	West Bengal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5.00	—	5.00
10.	Hyderabad	3.70	1.00	1.00	0.50	—	—	—	—	—	3.50	0.30	10.00
11.	Jammu & Kashmir	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12.	Madhya Bharat	1.77	—	—	1.00	—	1.73	4.66	—	0.75	10.00	0.71	20.62
13.	Mysore	1.50	—	2.30	—	4.00	—	—	—	—	—	0.20	8.00
14.	Pepsu	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.00	—	2.00
15.	Rajasthan	3.66	2.00	1.00	0.66	—	—	—	7.00	0.48	—	0.20	15.00
16.	Saurashtra	—	—	1.15	—	—	—	1.13	—	—	2.22	—	4.50
17.	Ajmer	1.26	0.18	0.91	—	1.00	—	0.15	0.05	0.35	—	0.39	4.29
18.	Bhopal	0.31	—	—	0.16	—	—	—	—	—	0.03	—	0.50
19.	Delhi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.00	1.00
20.	Kutch	0.51	—	0.15	—	0.20	—	—	—	—	0.05	—	0.91
21.	Manipur	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
22.	Tripura	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
23.	Vindhya Pradesh	—	0.50	—	—	0.25	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.75
	Total	57.22	44.87	22.54	10.97	14.45	2.13	5.94	7.28	1.58	27.80	26.80	221.58

*Report of Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1955—Part II, Page 138.

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the department, the target for the year 1956-57 and 1957-58 have been achieved and the work is going on satisfactorily. According to another scheme it is decided to settle every year 40 families of ex-criminal tribes, giving five acres of land to each family.

Scheme No. 11 provides facilities to the ex-criminal tribes to get a training in the mills and factories. The scheme is being implemented through the Director of Industries, Punjab. The trainee is paid a stipend of Rs. 25 per mensem during the training period. In this scheme the achievements are not satisfactory though the Government is trying to utilise the funds provided fully and properly.

Scheme No. 12 provides funds for the training of nurse *dais*. This scheme is launched to look after the health of the women-folk of the ex-criminal tribes. Four nurse *dais* have been appointed wherever the population of these people is concentrated,and they will continue for the entire plan period.

Scheme No. 13 is to award scholarships to the students belonging to the ex-criminal tribes. This scheme is being implemented by the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab. The students who are economically more backward are given stipend from the very beginning of their education and it is hoped that many students will be benefited.

Scheme No. 14 is meant to give loans to members of the ex-criminal tribes for settling in trades learnt. Until recently the total provision had not been utilised and the report of the department says: "As a matter of fact the demand for the grant of loans, under this scheme is not keen and the Government is considering to exclude this scheme from the plan and substitute some more useful scheme."

Regarding the distribution of the grant for the construction of modern houses, the scheme in the Punjab is being implemented very haphazardly. Two years ago something very interesting happened in the distribution of subsidies for the construction of the new houses. The subsidies were not given after a proper survey and investigation of the actual necessity and economic conditions of the needy persons. In the allotment of subsidies, the lottery system was followed. The riddle is still unsolved, how did these people manage the lottery system ? The proper way would be to receive applications and then to investigate the actual necessity and the situation of the applicant. It is the duty of the Government to see that the national funds are invested most usefully. Even the Sansi public greatly resented their so-called social

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workers and leaders for getting subsidies for building the houses for themselves, without helping any poor and needy persons who actually deserved financial help for this purpose. However, it is learnt that it is considered to give up the lottery system of distributing subsidies and if so, it is good.

At any rate, from these schemes of the Central and State Governments, one can realise the difference between the Foreign and the National Governments. The Foreign Government tried its best to brutalise the de-notified tribes of India but the National Government is bent on civilising and ameliorating them. Its greatest proof is found in the proceedings of the conference described below :—

On the 26th and 27th July, 1962, the Ministry of Home Affairs, held a conference in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, of the State Ministers in charge of Welfare of Backward Classes. They discussed their programmes of the third five-year Plan. In this conference they considered the following points about the de-notified Tribes of India :—

The Third Plan provides Rs. 4 crores as shown in the State-wise statement given in Table C on pp. 275-6, for the welfare of the de-notified tribes as against the outlays during the first and second Plans of about Rs. 1.10 crores and Rs. 2.48 crores respectively. With a view to providing incentive to the State Governments for giving proper attention to these groups and drawing up suitable schemes for them it was decided that the programmes for the welfare of de-notified tribes will be centrally sponsored, and the State Governments were asked to draw up comprehensive schemes for this purpose.

From a scrutiny of the Schemes formulated by the State Governments under the third five-year Plan it, however, appears that the State Governments are not very clear about the problems of de-notified tribes and types of schemes to be undertaken for them. Though it is observed that the schemes of economic uplift have a large proportion in the overall programme, their pattern remains more or less the same as in the Second Plan suggestions :

The following suggestions were made with a view to bring about an improvement in the programme for the welfare of de-notified tribes :—

1. The programme for the de-notified tribes should aim both at their reformation and rehabilitation. For such a programme to be effective, it is necessary to have detailed information on the socio-economic condition of these communities. The State

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Governments should therefore be requested to conduct rapid sample surveys to gather information on their livelihood pattern—arts and crafts practised, state of literacy, housing condition and criminal practices, attitudes, etc. The schemes formulated in the Third Plan can be suitably modified in the light of findings of such surveys to make the programme more effective and realistic. This is the first essential step. Already it is understood that the Government of Madras has begun to undertake this study.

2. A larger share should be given to the programme for their economic rehabilitation and the schemes for economic development should cover two-thirds of the expenditure on their welfare.
3. To curb the growing and alarming practice of adopting illicit distillation as a regular source of income a special committee should be set up to examine the ways and means by which the member of de-notified tribes should be weaned away from this practice and provided with other lawful occupations.
4. It will be advisable to confine the programme for the development of agriculture to those de-notified communities only which have an aptitude for cultivation. This programme should be supported by a suitable follow-up programme, like grant of subsidy for irrigation and purchase of agricultural implements, etc.
5. It is noticed that members of de-notified tribes easily take to hawking business, such as selling fruits, vegetables, cutlery, toys, etc. and this trade is able to provide them with some steady income. It is suggested that more and more persons should be encouraged to take up such business by giving them subsidies. A subsidy of Rs. 100 per family seems to be adequate.
6. A number of de-notified tribes work as labourers in construction and road works, extracting stones from quarries, etc. It is suggested that labour contract societies should be organised for them to enable them to work collectively as labourers in the construction of dams, canals, etc. Necessary financial assistance may also be given to such societies.
7. Brick-making is another important industry which the members of de-notified tribes can easily take up. There is a great demand for bricks all over the country and not much technical guidance is required for working the industry. Some of the members of de-notified tribes have already started making

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bricks in Maharashtra State. It is suggested that co-operative societies of brick-makers may be organised and financial assistance in the form of loan and subsidy may be granted to them. Each such society should be able to provide employment to about 50 families. These societies should be given financial assistance for erecting furnace, purchase of raw materials like burnt coal, sand, mud, etc.

8. Almost all the de-notified communities keep cattle and are good at rearing them. In the economic development programme for de-notified tribes dairy farming should be given a greater role. The dairy products have good market value in cities and towns. It is also suggested that dairy farming should be organised among them on co-operative basis in the neighbourhood of cities, etc. Financial assistance should be given to these co-operatives on loan-cum-subsidy basis for the purchase of milch-cattle, and construction of cattle-sheds, etc.
9. There are many communities among the de-notified tribes which are expert in keeping poultry birds and pigs. There is scope for the development of piggery and poultry as not much capital is required for running these professions on items such as construction of poultry and piggery sheds, feeding troughs and purchasing poultry birds and pigs of improved breeds. Such schemes should however be located in areas outside the city-limits to avoid insanitation.
10. As the members of de-notified tribes like jobs which give them immediate remuneration, industrial employment is an attractive occupation to them. Better employment-situation should, therefore, be created for them by absorbing them in large-scale and small-scale industries in large numbers. The question of reservation of posts for them may also be considered. Arrangements should be made with the industrial concerns to employ them as labourers. The large scale industrialization going on in the country can provide a very useful avenue of employment to the members of de-notified tribes.
11. As a result of the stigma attached to them or for various other reasons the educated members of de-notified tribes are often unable to secure jobs. Help of the voluntary organisations should be sought in enlisting the co-operation of private employers in securing suitable jobs for them as also in helping to mould the public opinion in their favour. The State Social Welfare Departments should also play an important part in the matter.

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12. In view of the serious problem of indebtedness among the various de-notified communities it will be worthwhile to consider taking up legislative measures to give them relief from indebtedness. Steps should also be taken up for providing facilities for alternative credit on easy terms by setting up more co-operative credit societies for them.
13. It is observed that the presence of habitual offenders and other hardened criminals in the de-notified tribes colonies is an impediment in the reform of the other members. This tougher section try to persuade the others not to give up their criminal habits. It would be desirable to separate this hardened section from the others so as to remove evil influences.
14. At present there are large colonies of de-notified tribes, such as the Umedpur colony in Sholapur District in Maharashtra State. These colonies have a number of de-notified tribes exhibiting varying degrees of criminality. It has been noticed that reformation work is difficult in larger colonies. The collection of de-notified tribes in large numbers lead to their encouraging each other to resist good influences by their being numerically stronger. Steps should, therefore, be taken to see that members of de-notified tribes are not concentrated in one place. Such a step, if taken, would also weaken the influence of their traditional Panchayats which encourage and foster criminal practices.
15. The criminal activities of the de-notified tribes are largely emphasised by their cultural pattern. A number of these groups get sanction for criminal activities in their religious beliefs. We can expect to get the best results from our efforts only when the objectionable practices prevalent among them have been done away with. This can be achieved by educating them and by convincing them of the futility of their anti-social customs and religious practices. The programme of rehabilitation of de-notified tribes should, therefore, be supported with instructions in social education. In this task the services of voluntary organisations can be utilised.
16. It has not been recognised that crime should be treated as a disease and the criminal as a patient. Keeping this in view the services of trained psychologists and psychiatrists should be utilised for their reformation. The classification of colonies according to the varying degree of criminality among the inhabitants would be of help in the psychological case-studies.

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17. Organised Community Centre activities and family welfare services by trained workers would be greatly helpful in maintaining contacts and inspiring confidence specially when they want to come up with their problems.
18. There is urgent need for providing proper housing facilities to the members of de-notified tribes. While getting up new houses for them, it should be ensured that all the houses are not built in one area. It would be better to build houses for them in different localities to hasten their integration with the general society. As far as possible mixed housing co-operatives, which include members of other communities too, should be encouraged. We can make a start with Communities like Lamans of Maharashtra who have largely given up their criminal habits and are gaining confidence of other communities. It will also be useful to give individual housing subsidies to the members of de-notified tribes so that they may build their houses in localities inhabited by other communities as well. As far as possible the colonisation of de-notified tribes at one place should be avoided as it encourages segregation and unhealthy upbringing.
19. As far as possible the children of the de-notified tribes, particularly those belonging to communities which are not easily amenable to reform because of their unhealthy psychology, should be provided education in Ashram-schools. There is need for opening more such schools in the States having de-notified tribes' population.
20. The State Education Departments should give priority to the children belonging to de-notified tribes for admission to generel hostels by relaxing rules and regulations for them. This would facilitate the de-notified tribes' children to mix up with other children freely and would help them in developing a healthy psychology which would ultimately result in their integration with the society.
21. Some of the denotified tribes have shown an aptitude for jobs requiring technical skills. This should be fully exploited by establishing technical training institutes where they could be given training in the jobs such as of general mechanics, line-men, turners, etc. Similar institutes set up for scheduled tribes have been reported to be very successful. It may also be necessary to relax educational qualifications and reserving seats for de-notified tribe students to facilitate their admission

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in other industrial schools. The State Welfare Department should seek the cooperation of the Education Department in this matter.

22. It is suggested that research should be conducted to study the effect of the various measures undertaken for the welfare of de-notified tribes on their personality, socio-economic changes brought about in their life, add to gauge how far the development programme have helped in the process of their integration with the general society. For this purpose, the services of the Cultural Research Institutes set up in the various states should be utilised. These Institutes could be given some funds from the allocations made for de-notified tribes with the understanding that in each year at least one or two studies on these communities will be undertaken by them.

23. To keep a regular watch on the progress made in the running of the colonies for the de-notified tribes, the State Governments may be asked to give periodical reports on these colonies. These reports should give information on the progress achieved every year in the fields of education, training in arts and crafts and employment provided to the members of de-notified tribes in services, etc.

TABLE C

Statement showing State-wise Budget outlays for De-notified Tribes in the third Plan (1961-66)

Sl. No.	State/Union Territories	Central Sector	State Sector	Total
1	2	3	4	5
			(*Rs. in lakhs*)	
1.	Andhra Pradesh	25.70	...	25.70
2.	Assam	...	...	...
3.	Bihar	...	...	...
4.	Maharashtra	...	19.00	19.00
5.	Gujarat	24.25	...	24.25
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	...	...	...
7.	Kerala	...	...	...
8.	Madhya Pradesh	34.91	...	34.91
9.	Madras	79.85	...	79.85

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1	2	3	4	5
10.	Mysore	21.05	...	21.05
11.	Orissa	9.70	...	9.70
12.	Punjab	14.14	1.60	...
13.	Rajasthan	21.05	...	21.05
14.	Uttar Pradesh	140.00	...	140.00
15.	West Bengal	4.35	...	4.35
	Total	375.00	20.60	379.86
Union Territories				
1.	Delhi	...	3.25	3.25
2.	Himachal Pradesh	...	...	...
3.	Manipur	...	...	...
4.	Tripura	...	...	...
5.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	...	...	...
6.	Laccadive, Minicoy, & Amindivi Islands	...	...	...
7.	Pondicherry	...	...	...
	Total	...	3.25	3.25
	Grand Total	375.00	23.85	398.85

It is really pridable that the Punjab Government has taken lead in the Welfare Schemes for the neglected classes. Prior to the general elections of India in 1962, the Punjab was also going on normally with the uplift programme of these people, just like the other States of India. But immediately after the general elections of 1962, the Punjab Government put forth a memorable and very ambitious programme for the amelioration of the depressed classes including the de-notified tribes. So much so that over and above the money provided by the Central Government, the Punjab Government passed a special Act in order to raise eight crores rupees by imposing new taxes on the people of the Punjab, to spend this money on the welfare-scheme of these people. This was really a great step, very much laudable in the social history of India and the Punjab Government was deeply earnest to carry out this programme but it was left half way due to National Emergency and opposition. If the ambition

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of the Punjab Government is fulfilled, then the day is not very distant, when the de-notified tribes will also thrive in all the aspects of life, along with their other brethern who have been socially hit hard and have been living in a pitiable plight, since centuries.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SOCIO—POLITICAL AWAKENING

"Every political question is becoming a social question, and every social question is becoming a religious question."

—R.T. ELY.

MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH gave the greatest political glory to the Sansi tribe. But after his death the Sansis never had any significant role in their political life. In the modern age and after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and annexation of the Punjab by the British rulers the socio-political life of the Sansis can be described in two periods—before Indian independence and after Indian independence—as follows :—

Before Indian Independence. Fifty years ago the political life of the Sansis was practically dormant. Poverty was crushing them, they were educationally backward and bound by the chains of the Criminal Tribes Act. This is proved by the words, "Nine tribes have been registered under the Criminal Tribes Act. Of them the most important are the Sansis, the Bawarias and Mahatams ; they are usually settled in the villages, under the charge of a police guard, whose duty it is to see that no member of the tribe is absent without leave".[1]

Under these restrictions what political role of life could be expected from these people. Their life was at the mercy of the village headman and police constables who could give them life transportation or long imprisonment just out of petty resentments. So they were politically nothing more than dumb-driven cattle.

It was in the 1930s that some social and political amelioration came to the Sansis. Kot Ahdiyan was one of the settlements of de-notified tribes in the Punjab. This village is situated in the district of Sheikhpura (West Punjab), in the tahsil of Shahdara at a distance of three miles from the Kala Khatai railway station, to the west. A Sansi young man named Buta Ram came of this village. He was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Arya

1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XX, p. 363, 1908.

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Samaj and he did commendable social work for the Sansis and other ex-criminal tribes of Punjab. He brought many Sansis under the influence of the Arya Samaj. He tried to awaken his community both socially and politically for which he held some conferences whose expenditure was borne by the Arya Samaj, Lahore. He also raised his voice for the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, but unfortunately he died in prime of his youth.

Immediately after 1940, the desire of being emancipated from this obnoxious Act became strong in the Sansis. They sent representations to many officers concerned with the Criminal Tribes Act, but their representations remained like a cry in wilderness. Till partition, some of the Sansi young men passed the Matriculation and they were studying in some colleges of the Punjab. Due to education and their direct contact with other advanced people, they harboured great hatred against the Criminal Tribes Act. After independence the rulers of India were changed and along with others the Sansis also became more conscious, politically. The Criminal tribes remained slaves even five years after the Indian independence, as the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed on 31 August, 1952.

After Indian Independence. It has already been stated in some previous chapter that in 1950 four Sikh scheduled castes were given concessions, like the Hindu depressed classes. The problem of other Sikh depressed classes was left unsolved. In the general election of 1952, a very highly qualified Sikh young man of the Sansi community wanted to contest the election for reserved seat of the Legislative Assembly, supported by the Sikhs. His nomination papers were rejected by the Returning Officer, Farid Kot, on the ground that he could not contest an election for a reserved seat as a Sikh and he could get the reserved rights only as a Hindu. This incident hurt all the Sikh depressed classes, excepting those four castes for whom this condition was waived in 1950. After that, that young man suffered also in getting a good government service for the same reason, in spite of being exceptionally qualified and well-read person.

In this general election, another Sikh young man of the Sansi community, a F.Sc., contested a seat for the State Legislative Assembly, from the constituency of Taran Tarn. He stood as an independent candidate. He was defeated due to the paucity of funds and lack of the support from any political party. In the general election of 1957, another Sansi contested the reserved seat from Gurdaspur but he was also defeated. These instances

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of Sansi young men show that the Sansis are now conscious of their political rights and duties in Indian Democracy.

After the elections of 1952, the Sikh masses and the leaders took up seriously the case of all the Sikh scheduled castes for their reserved rights like the down-trodden Hindus. The Sansi young man whose nomination papers were rejected at Farid Kot became the cause of this struggle of the Sikhs, along with several other instances in which some members of the Sikh scheduled castes had suffered for being Sikh and accordingly being unable to get advantage of certain concessions. The Government was not much willing to extend equal rights to the Sikh scheduled castes as it did with the Hindus. At last the Sikhs launched a 'Morcha' and in 1953, Dr. Katju, the then Home Minister of India, declared that all the Sikh depressed classes would get all the special rights, which were available to the Hindu scheduled castes, without any discrimination of religion. This is why the Sansis are more exceedingly desirous of becoming Sikhs, in some districts of the Punjab.

Since 1952 the Sansis had become honourable citizens of India, because of the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act. In 1954, one young and educated Sansi of the Punjab began to work for the uplift of this community and many young and educated Sansis followed him. He founded the "Sansi Sudhar Sabha—Punjab and Pepsu". This Sabha was entirely meant for the social reform of the Sansis. The new members had to abide by the terms of the membership of the Sabha, which are given below :—

1. I pledge that I will educate my children to the best of my capacity.
2. I will abide by the social welfare programme of the Indian Government.
3. I will not observe any superstitious and extravagant ceremonies on marital and obsequial occasions in my family.
4. I will not object to any woman for climbing on the roof of her house, drawing water from a well, wearing any dress for bathing under the hand-water pump *(nalka)*. I will uproot these social evils.
5. I will fight for the freedom of women.
6. I hereby give up drinking and other intoxicants and I will not use them on any occasion.
7. As a supporter of human rights and freedom, I am in the favour that any Sansi can observe Hindu or Sikh rites at marriages and deaths and I renounce the old custom of *chhapri*.

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8. I will save the poor by preventing the lavish customs of *siran*, *tindan* and *balhni*.
9. I support the abolition of the present tribal system of panchayat.
10. I will not take any dispute of mine to the illiterate panches of the Sansi panchayat.
11. I will stand by the principles and decisions of this Sabha.
12. I will neither receive the *auladu janj* nor I will go along with anybody else's and I will put an end to the custom of *sirkis*.

This Sabha's first meeting was held at Dharm Kot Bagga, Tehsil Batala, District Gurdaspur. The social evils mentioned in the membership form have already been explained in the social organisation of the Sansis. But the Sabha was initiated by the Sansis of the Districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar and it is these people who are most backward regarding social evils.

Some young men and even some aged but progressive people did appreciable work to eliminate social evils from the uneducated and backward Sansis. They held many conferences. Some of them put their heart and soul so devotedly to social work that they toured throughout the Punjab and Pepsu in order to make their Sabha or organisation successful.

Some of them were so moved by this altruistic work that they resigned from Government services. Along with their work of social uplift, they became sufficiently conscious of their political rights. In the Session of the Indian Congress, held at Amritsar, from the 7th of February to 13th of February, 1956, some social workers of the Sansis presented a memorandum to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, which is given below :

Sir,

You are the sweetest and the greatest hope of the hopes not only of India but also of the people of the world, yearning, struggling and striving for the achievement of peace, prosperity and progress.

We sorrowfully, but now heartfully and hopefully request you that once we were the owners of this land of ours. According to vicissitudes of history the Britishers kept us as criminal tribes under the Criminal Tribes Act. This Act crushed every person alike on the basis of birth and made no

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allowance for anybody's noble, honest, gentle and law-loving work, spirit and worth.

To the good luck of lacs of innocent souls in the clutches of cruelty and callousness, the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952 by the Indian Government after the achievement of Indian Independence in 1947.

There were depressed classes in India but the people of Vimukt Jatian (ex-criminal tribes) were doubly depressed—firstly socio-economically and secondly and more mercilessly, legally and politically, under the Criminal Tribes Act.

Now India is making very long strides in the field of progress of modern world. We also, as the loyal citizens of free India, request you for following things and if they are kindly implemented, this session of the Indian National Congress being held at Amritsar will leave an ever-glowing and blissful memory on the destiny of the people of Vimukt Jatian of the Punjab and Pepsu :

(i) There are lakhs of acres of land under jungles in the district of Karnal and even in Pepsu. Kindly settle colonies of Vimukt Jatian, allocating at least 10 acres of jungle to every family. The grantees will clear the jungle with their hands and arduous labour, and if possible, the necessary aid in the accomplishment of this work should also be kindly given to us. If once we are rooted on the soil of India as sturdy and hardworking sons of soil and tillers, we will prove assets to the economy of India.

(ii) Our youth should compulsorily be given some industrial training. With some art of handicraft, they will be able to earn an honourable living.

(iii) Highly educated persons of Vimukt Jatian may kindly be nominated to the I.A.S., P.C.S. and such other Government services.

Some social workers of the Sansis made extensive tours in different parts of India and they studied the socio-economic condition of the ex-criminal tribes. In 1957 they decided to increase the scope of their Sudhar Sabha to all the ex-criminal tribes of the Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Accordingly they shifted their headquarters from Amritsar to Ludhiana, now the central place of East Punjab. They kept working for the uplift of ex-criminal tribes with great effort. They got their Sabha registered.

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Future of Their Political Life

From a close study of the demands of the memorandum, we see that some of the demands are genuine and useful for the ex-criminal tribes, but some of the demands are baseless and thoughtless. Although the Sansi youngmen began the work of uplift with great sincerity and enthusiasm yet at present they are disunited and divided. Another discouraging fact of their political life is that none of the organisers or office bearers of their Sabha is educated and trained person.

At present no educated Sansi is taking interest in political life. The reason is clear. The Sansis are generally poor people. They hardly educate their sons. After the completion of education an educated Sansi youngman is forced by circumstances to seek for some employment in order to lead a good life and he cannot afford to indulge in politics which is a very precarious way of life. But unless intelligent persons take up the political problems of the ex-criminal tribes, the work will be done in a very unplanned way which is bound to lead nowhere.

In short, the Sansis have much awakened and they are conscious of their rights and duties, but nothing can still definitely be said about their future political life. It can be surmised that after two or three decades, when their economic life is improved, the number of educated persons among them will increase and the political experience will become deeper and wider, they will surely occupy a political rank in Indian society, which is due to them.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SANSI FOLK-SONGS

"A folk song is neither new nor old because it is continually taking on new life; it is an individual flowering on a common stem." —*Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

THE PEOPLE OF THE PUNJAB are romantic by nature. Environments have direct influence on man. The land of the five rivers is full of beauty and charm and it has got an enviable share of natural gifts from God. The natural surroundings—greenness of crops and trees, charm of flowing rivers, fertility of land and ease of getting livelihood—provide sufficient ground for the expression of amorous instincts of man. Punjab has produced many lovers whose names are always glowing in the literary history of the world. The more the people of a land are care-free and jolly, the more lively and real their folk-songs are. The Punjabi language is very rich in folk-songs. One is wonderstruck to see the Punjabis in rural *melas*, marriages and on several other joyous occasions when they sing folk-songs of the lovers and recite epic poems of the brave men of the Punjab. They relate many traditions and legends in very natural, frank and poetical way. The women-folk of the Punjab are more colourful in expression of their inner joy and feelings through folk-songs than men. If Bhangra dance of the Punjabi men is remembered with pride and fascination in Indian literature, the Gidha of the young girls towers above the Bhangra dance. The Sithnies on the marriage occasions, the songs of Lohri, the Tappas of Mahiya Balo and many other forms of women-folk-songs represent Punjabi life in different aspects. From the Punjabi folk-songs, the problems and difficulties of the women-folk are also depicted in a very simple, direct and masterful way. The Bolies and Dholas of the Punjabi young men are equally charming. There are numerous forms and varieties of Punjabi folk-songs sung by the Punjabis. The Sansis are very conspicuous in this respect. I have collected some of their folk-songs and their translation is given here just for the sake of variety and specimen.

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DHOLAS—PROFESSIONALLY SUNG BY THE SANSIS OF PUNJAB

Origin of Dhola. The Punjabi folk-song Dhola takes its origin from the land of Rajasthan where it is called 'Dhola Maru'. Dhola was the name given to the prince Sahlkumar, son of Raja Nal of Kotnarwar. Due to some internal strife Raja Nal had to leave his kingdom and he sought refuge from the Raja of Marwar in Rajasthan. The queens of both the Rajas were expectant. They used to remain like sisters in the same place and great love grew between them. Raja Nal and his queen were indebted to the Raja and Queen of Marwar for being helped in hard times. The queens wanted to be related somehow or other. They promised with each other to marry their children if they happened to be of opposite sexes. As God willed the refugee queen gave birth to a son who was named Sahlkumar. Two days after the birth of Sahlkumar the queen of Marwar gave birth to a daughter who was named Marwani. Sahlkumar was two days older than Marwani. The early marriage has got deep and old roots in Indian Society. The queens succeeded in compelling their respective husbands to concede to their proposal and Sahlkumar and Marwani were married in their cradles.

After some time the Raja of Kotnarwar was able to recapture his kingdom and he migrated to Kotnarwar when Sahlkumar was just a baby. Sahlkumar was called Dhol out of love. He grew young but was absolutely unaware of his marriage with Marwani who was called Sammi. Kumar's father Raja Nal died and Dhol succeeded him. Dhol was married to a princess named Ambi Kachhwahi whose father was Kachhwah by caste.

Sammi also became young. The parents of Sammi considered her infant marriage cancelled. So they did not disclose anything to Sammi regarding her marriage with Dhol. In Marwar there was a very interesting and peculiar custom amongst the girls. All the girls used to play in three separate and categorical groups—the unbetrothed, the betrothed and the married. One day Sammi went to play with the girls but she was hurt to see when all of the three groups shirked to let her join the game. She asked the cause of her being segregated and one of the outspoken girls said : "We do not know to which group you belong. Before joining any group you must tell whether you are unbetrothed, betrothed or married." She did not know it and so went back to her mother and obstinately asked all about the matter. Her mother explained everything about her infant marriage and also told much about

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Dhol. Knowing all about her marriage she became sad and was fired with love for Dhol. She determined to have Dhol as her husband. She remained in the pangs of love. By and by, her love for Dhol became known far and wide in the Punjab and Rajasthan. She opted different means to convey her message to Dhol but his wife Ambi Kachhwahi always duped, dissuaded and kept him in dark about Marwani. Marwani sang songs of love for Dhol which were called Dholas. At last she succeeded in sending her spies with her letters to Dhol explaining the entire matter. When Dhol knew he became angry with Ambi Kachhwahi. He reached Marwar with royal pomp and show and took Sammi as his real wife. After that the lover and the beloved remained together passing a happy life. Now in the Punjab, the young girls call their lovers Dhol. The folk-song Dhol occupies a very prompt position in the Punjabi folklore. Now there is no end to the variety and themes of Dholas. If all of them are collected they make volumes. A few varieties of Dholas are given below :

Dholas of Dhol Turaoo (of departing lover). In these Dholas one can actually realise the acute pain and feelings of a beloved, in separation from her lover :

(I)

My Dhol is departing for Kashmir, what a blunder I have committed !
I have not drawn his picture for keepsake.
I have not found any real sympathiser, everybody is selfish for his own ends.
After the death of the king the minister is mere nobody,
No scheme is effective when something pre-destined happens.
The hermits once departed never return, they have no interest in this world.
For God's sake once come back to me, the end of my life is close.

(II)

My Dhol is going to depart, I am enquiring days and dates,
You have bound me with charm of your cutting features and love,
God knows what magic and sorcery you have applied to me,
One should not have malice and ill-motives against those with whom one co-dines.
I have renounced my religious faith for your sake,
I have challenged the time-honoured customs,

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Your separation has tortured me like a crucifier,
For your sake I left thrones and palaces, I have become a beggar
to get the alms of your love,
Only the sincere persons know the value of love and faith
yearningly,
For God's sake once come back to me, I am waiting for you day
and night.

(III)

My Dhol is departing, I am enquiring his whereabouts,
I have got golden bangle on my wrist and amulets round my arm,
I am standing in the street, waiting for my lover,
My ear-rings are matchless and my black locks are thick and
beautiful,
But of no avail without the presence of my dear one,
For God's sake come back to me, I am waiting for you, in your
separation.

(IV)

My Dhol is departing, I am preventing him from going,
The sneaks have poisoned his ears, my rival has dissuaded and
deceived him,
We played and lived together but now there is rare chance of
meeting,
I loved him in my infancy, now I am repenting,
For God's sake, once come back to me, my Dhol, at least reply to
my letters.

Dholas of Chhatte te Bunde (head-locks and *boll* ear-rings. In the Punjab the young girls wear boll-earrings which are called *bundas* in Punjabi. They also grow *chhattas* or long locks of hair on head in a typical trained and trimmed manner. The boll-earrings are worn only by the girls whereas the *chhattas* are grown by both the sexes. Men may grow *chattas* for any age but the *chhattas* in the case of females are kept by the young girls only till their marriage as after marriage they grow their hair long. Then they wear *medhies* and *gutts* of long hair. The spirit of romance enters the head and heart of youth particularly in adolescence before marriage. The *chhattas* are worn usually by the Muslim girls or by some other communities which are dependent upon or under the influence of the Muslims. So some Sansis of the West Punjab also grow *chhattas* and their girls wear *bundas*.

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In these Dholas it is depicted how a young beloved remembers and calls her departing lover, describing her *chhattas*, *bundas* and her bewitching beauty of face and eyes.

(I)

The *bundas* are hanging in the ears and the *chhattas* have beautifully grown on the head,
The parents send me to mosque for reading, the *mullah* teaches,
But I forget my lessons being absorbed in the thought of my lover,
Leaving everything aside, I am standing on the footpaths,
Waiting for the passers-by who come from my lover's land,
I am simply a body and my soul is my lover,
We must unite some day as Gujries and Kahan meet at Mathura,
Kindly once come to me, why have you set your heart there?

(II)

Boll-earrings are hanging in my ears, the locks have grown in fullness,
I am giving my message to the passers-by, "If you personally see my lover, it will be great kind of you, otherwise say to him,
"Think of your beloved whom you left behind crying and sighing,
First you got my heart and now you are betraying me,
The spark of life is almost extinguished from all parts of the body.
Now it seems to be near my throat to take its flight to heaven.
Betrayal disappoints a person like the clouds which thunder but pass away without giving a single drop of rain and thus disappoint the drought and famine-stricken peasantry."

(III)

The *bundas* are hanging in my ears, the *chhattas* are long and luring,
They hang and prick my forehead with some amorous secret,
Their touch and feel travel in whole of my body,
If you were not able to bear the burden of love, you should have not shouldered it,
My love with Dhol began in infancy, even the preacher talks of it in the mosque,
I am like Heer who was intoxicated with *ishq* like a drunkard,
Please come soon, my end is imminent.

(IV)

The *bundas* are hanging in the ears, the *chhattas* are long and lovely,

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I wash my *chhattas* with curd and butter, I clean and straighten them with my comb,
They have curled on the back of my neck,
The collyrium-adorned eyes of mine are attractive like those of a fairy,
O merciless, nobody breaks as you have broken the tie of love,
You enchanted me with your magical charm and I believe in victory of the true love,
The boatman simply rows his boat, it is the will of God that carries the boat safe to the other bank of the river.

(V)

The *bundas* are hanging in the ears and the *chhattas* are curling,
I am wearing red shirt, whole of the village has become desolate after the departure of my lover,
The world seems to be like a garden without flowers,
For God's sake once come back to me, I am waiting for you.

(VI)

The boll-earrings are hanging in my ears, the *chhattas* are attractive,
Golden girdle-ring *(hass)* is round my neck,
You tell a lie, even God can bear it out that I am only yours,
Had I known your doubtful nature, I would have died before loving you,
Please come to me, I cannot live without you.

(VII)

My friend is departing, I caught him by his skirt,
I kept up false hopes, the dawn of departure came,
The twinge of separation has oppressed me, my body is aching,
They always remain dismayed and downcast whom the snake of *ishq* has bitten,
My damsel, today in the morning an astrologer came,
All the love-stricken maidens questioned him about their lovers,
Seeing this all my body was drenched in perspiration,
The remembrance of my lover roasted my heart,
Still I believe my true love will succeed,
We shall meet and see the day of triumph.

Dholas of Charkha (spinning wheel). Like different classic varieties of poetry in general, the Dholas have many ideological varieties.

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Some mystic poets (sufis) have composed Dholas of mystical ideas. In the Dholas of *charkha* the poet has compared human body with a *charkha* and has asked mankind to do good deeds which will help soul in the long run. He means that one day the human body will get old and break away like an old spinning wheel. So a man should perform good deeds in his life which may be helpful to him here and hereafter. Below two Dholas of *charkha* are given as specimens :

(I)

O beautiful and charming spinning wheel, work, work and work well,
After many births I have been able to procure you,
You must say your five prayers, keep all the thirty fasts in the month of Ramzan,
Only your own deeds will count on the day of justice,
Nobody will be able to help you, some day the god of death will snatch away your soul from you,
Only the good deeds and truth will stand by you in the presence of God,
The poet says the Muslims must remember Allah and the Hindus must not forget their Ram.

(II)

Beautiful spinning wheel, work, work and work hard,
You have four senses—the sense of sight, the sense of smell, the sense of hearing and the sense of taste,
The fifth sense of touch is directly concerned with your body which will also perish,
You have many physical, psychological and spiritual attributes,
You have hundreds of arteries and veins,
In spite of this huge equipment at your disposal, why don't you work honestly ?
You have nine apertures in your body, having separate constructions,
Work humbly, as thousands of spinning wheels like you have perished in pride,
Those who are indifferent to their duty will repent in the next world,
The foolish people do not understand this hint,
Remember God, His name will light your dark way.

Dholas of Mirza Sahiban. The romantic tale of Mirza Sahiban

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is very popular in the Punjab. This is a native love story which took place between the rivers, the Ravi and the Chenab. Sahiban was daughter of Khiva Khan, a Jat of Siyal tribe of the district of Jhang to which belonged Heer also. Mirza, son of Vanjhal, was Kharal of Ravi in the Sandal Bar. Sahiban lost her mother in childhood. Mirza lost his father in youth. Mirza's mother-in-law *(massi)* named Bibo lived at Khiva and she was a neighbour of Sahiban. Mirza passed his childhood at Khiva under the care of his Massi Bibo. Mirza was the most handsome and healthy youngman of his time in the Punjab and similar was the position of Sahiban in beauty and charm. Both of them were put in the village school housed in the village mosque, under the tutorship of the village *mullah*. Mirza and Sahiban developed a deep love for each other in childhood when they used to study together in the same class, always sitting together. That is why Chandi, a poet of Punjabi folklore says on behalf of Sahiban, "Our glances mingled in the mosque, Mirza is my lover from my very beginning of life."

Both Mirza and Sahiban grew young but it was difficult for them to be separated from each other. Although reluctantly yet Mirza had to leave Khiva for his parental village Danabad because of the fuss being created at Khiva about his love affair with Sahiban. Mirza had his steed, Neeli Bakki, which was unsurpassed in her gait and gallop. He could not set his heart at Danabad and often rode to Khiva to see his beloved Sahiban. Mirza's brothers, sisters, mother and other relatives always prevented him from going to Khiva, but *ishq* knows no bounds, pains and perils. To the grief of Mirza, Sahiban was betrothed with a young man of Chandhar tribe. So a bitter enmity arose between Mirza's Kharal tribe on one side and the Siyals and the Chandhars on the other side.

At last the date of the marriage of Sahiban was fixed. Sahiban secretly sent message to Mirza through Karmoon Brahmin of her village, that if Mirza were really a brave lover, he must come to Khiva and take her away wherever he liked. Hearing this news he could not pocket the taunt of his beloved. So he jumped on his steed and rode to Khiva overnight. He stayed in the house of his Massi Bibo where she could manage to bring Sahiban. Mirza ran away with Sahiban. After knowing this all the Siyals and the marriage party of Chandhars pursued the lover and the beloved as it was the day on which the marriage party of Sahiban had come to Khiva to marry her. On the way

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to Danabad, Mirza committed a great blunder of negligence being proud of his bravery and strength. He slept under the shade of a *jand* tree. The enemies overtook him and cut him into pieces. The story is related that Sahiban hid or broke the arrows of Mirza when he was sleeping. Hence being deprived of his arrows, he was mercilessly butchered by his enemies. After Mirza's death the Kharals wreaked vengeance on the Siyals and destroyed Khiva. Peeloo's *Mirza Sahiban* is found in the Punjabi *vaars* or *surs*. Chandi composed it in *baint*—a poetical form. But this story in the form of Dholas which the Sansis sing was composed by a village poet Miyan Ghulam. A few selected Dholas are given below :

(I)

O Sahiban, fear God so that people may not call you unwise,
why should one go out for begging if one is self-sufficient at home ?
The glance of chastity is always downward, one should save one's forefather's honour,
One should not be insolent to mother, nor one should talk aloud before her like a thundering cloud.
The poet says, "It is wise to call bad person bad as the people consider it proper".

(II)

Sahiban, it is very bad on your part, to reply audaciously,
The tale-bearers will lose nothing, who have spread defame.
I have kept you in my womb for nine months,
And I have brought you up with many sacrifices and difficulties,
Now you talk intolerably. What have I gained by giving birth to you ?
Sahiban, one day the Chandhars will bring their marriage party,
The poet says, "One day we will put you in your bride-palanquin and will definitely marry you".

(III)

Sahiban, you have gripped the sword of obstinacy,
You are too vain in your persistence and stubbornness,
The parents whose daughters are disobedient and lax in morals,
Cannot sit respectably in the caste-panchayat,
The ears and noses of ill-advised and undesirable young daughters are cut,

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They are banished from the house and family,
The poet says, "Sahiban, one day the marriage party of Chandhars will come with precious gifts for you".

(IV)

Sahiban, keep quiet, you are not wise,
If you were chicken-hearted, you would have not loved Mirza.
Those who betray in love are called unfaithful,
One should never accompany a bad man and must avoid the way in which the enemies lie in lurch.
If one plays with veteran players, one should play with intelligence and alertness,
After all you determine to go with Mirza, make haste to receive him on the way.
The lover is gold and the beloved is a chemical called *sohaga* to give it more lustre,
Both of them should be melted together in the furnace of love.
The poet says, "One must always remember his or her own beloved,
And one should not be taken in by the charm and witchery of others".

(V)

Sahiban, always fear God and do not waver from your faith.
The flame of love is strong enough and roasts the hearts of all the lovers,
One should not pass through the street where one is bitterly criticised,
If the Siyals are chiefs of established nobility, the Chandhars are also Rajas of Chenab,
Your parents are greatly eager for your marriage,
They have prepared numerous ornaments, necklaces and precious clothes for you,
Many embroidered sheets, *phulkaris* and many attires of different hues,
They will give cows, buffaloes, mares and camels along with in your dowry,
The poet says, "Sahiban, one should never disobey parents if one wants salvation from God".

(VI)

Sahiban, Do not be contentious and audacious, as good education means respect and obedience to others,

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The charm of worldly ties is ephemeral and one should not depend on them.
You are impatiently waiting for Mirza in the pain of separation,
Sahiban says, "I am fiancee of Mirza, the claim of Chandhars is wrong and baseless".

(VII)

My faith is unshaken, I will meet Mirza.
The lovers devote themselves to love as the saints devote themselves to God,
Zulekhan prays everyday and Yusaf came from Kunian,
Majnoon danced along with the *kalanders* (monkey-keepers) and Lailan always uttered his name,

Farhad faced hardships and Shirin remained firm in her faith in him, Sohni swimmed through the flooded Chenab and was drowned,
But she did not go back on her promise to go to her lover.
Sahiban says, "There are many charming people in this world but I know only the charm of Mirza".

(VIII)

Sahiban says, "Mother, stop, do not quarrel, do not bind me with family and filial ties,
As love of relatives is wall of sand because after death only sincerity and faith will go with man,
Even beautiful ornaments and clothes on body will remain in this world,
In the next world, only good deeds and faith will help,
No relatives will be answerable for others' deeds before God,
I am faithful to Mirza, one day we shall meet".

(IX)

I have strong longing for my lover, may God unite us,
Then my inner self will be enlightened,
A flame of joy will appear and my soul will become all eternal light,
Only that one deserves to be called faithful who gives life for one's love,
This can be known only to him who can drink the nectar of *ishq*.
I sacrifice my life for Mirza, may he live for ever.

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(X)

Mother, do not worry me much, one day I must go with Mirza,
I have given up my alliance with my damsels as their company has no charm for me now,
Now I do not like milk, curd and *lassi*, nor I have any desire for food,
I am pining away in pangs of love, my colour has become pale,
But still I pray to God for stronger and acuter pain of love,
The poet says, "Sahiban, has unbreakable ties with Mirza,
God knows when Mirza turns up riding on his steed".

(XI)

Mirza left Danabad and reached Khiva early in the morning,
He reached his Massi Bibo, there was great hustle and bustle in the house of Siyals,
Secretly, Bibo sent for Sahiban who came to her house to see Mirza,
Mirza said in a taunting way, "Sahiban, see how I have come to you just on receiving your message,
I left behind even the marriage of my younger sister,
But you seem to be unmindful of me, one should never forget one's lover".

(XII)

Sahiban replied, "Taunting does not befit lovers,
I have given you my heart once for all, a flame of love has entered my soul,
Your taunt has become like an adder,
Tomorrow the people will talk that Sahiban has run away with Mirza".

(XIII)

Mirza bent his knee to give support and Sahiban placing her toes of left foot on his knee, jumped on the steed,
She sat behind him holding her shoulders fast,
Both of them rode on it but the strong and swift steed did not feel the burden much,
The steed fled from Khiva and was stopped in the jungle of Sahniwal,
Seeing lovely shade of the *jand* tree, Mirza was tempted to sleep and take rest under it,

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The poet says, "Mirza placed his head on the thigh of Sahiban,
And the mistaken lover fell into profound sleep from which he never rose again".

(XIV)

Suba, the uncle of Sahiban called all the Siyals together, and said,
"Now we have been dishonoured, our beards are in the hands of Kharals,
The young daughters should never be given undue freedom, leniency and indulgence,
If they are pampered once, the bad consequences are inevitable,
You have pampered your daughters, you have given them undue freedom,
Take your horses and let us go to the jungle in search of Sahiban,
Take your guns and muskets, take your swords and shields too,
Sahiban has worn the bracelet of *ishq* and has broken the glass bangles of her parental affection.
She has gone with her lover, giving up all the drudgeries of the world,
If found, cut the steed into pieces, do not take mercy on the quality of her gait and gallop,
If found, Mirza must be killed without showing any mercy to him".

(XV)

The Siyals attacked Mirza when he was in his profound sleep,
All the angels pitied the negligence of the lover,
The flowers of the jungle wilted away in sorrow,
The helpless and sad steed saw her master being murdered,
All the birds and animals were grieved to see the death of negligent lover,
The poet says, "Sahiban was not at fault, untimely sleep of Mirza became the cause of his death".

Dholas of Sassi-Punnoon. The love story of Sassi-Punnoon occupies a prominent position in the romantic folklore of the Punjab, like the love stories of Sohni-Mahiwal, Heer-Ranjha and Mirza-Sahiban. Seven centuries ago, there lived a king named Adim Khan or Adim Jam in the city of Bhambhore. He had no issue. After many prayers he was gifted with a daughter whose beauty fascinated everybody who saw her. She was known as Sassi. According to the convention and conviction of that time

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he sent for the fortune-tellers to have the forecast of her life. They predicted that Sassi would bring ignominy to his father's name, take his life and ruin his kingdom. So she should be killed at once after birth. The whimsical king believed in them, but he could not kill his own dear and only child. However, he decided to get rid of Sassi. At last he got a beautiful box made of sandal wood and decorated it with precious stones and gold. In spite of the deep grief of his own as well as that of his wife, he laid down the baby in that box, covered with beautiful and precious clothes early in the morning, and sent her afloat in the river on the bank of which the city of Bhambore was situated. In that city there lived a poor washerman named Atta. He had no child and so was yearning for the one. Early in the morning when he was washing clothes on that day he saw a box floating in the river. He plunged into water and brought that box out of the river. The box contained a beautiful child with three bags full of golden coins and precious stones. The husband and wife became inexpressively happy over it. They took the child home. Sassi grew up under the care and affection of her dhobi parents. Beauty came to her in greater and greater bloom along with her growing youth. Her poor parents were worried about her marriage having no suitable match for her in their caste. Being in the same city her real father and mother—the king and the queen—also came to know of the fact that she was Sassi, their own daughter found and taken home in the box by Atta dhobi. They tried to win her back but she would not leave her dhobi parents as she said to them that although she was thrown in the river by them yet her dhobi parents brought her up and saved her life. In her youth one night she saw a prince in dream and ever after that she was obsessed to have him as her life-companion.

Once a merchant came to Bhambore from the city of Kecham. He had a great hobby of possessing and displaying the pictures of princes, princesses, kings and queens of different lands. He had encamped in a garden and while once on a walk with other damsels, Sassi saw the picture of a bewitching prince who belonged to the native place of that merchant, the city known as Kecham. The picture was of the same prince as she saw in her dream, Sassi was very happy to see it as she felt as if her dream was coming to reality. She found out that the name of that prince was Punnoon, son of Ali of Kecham. She told this all to her king father and emphasised that if he really loved her he should manage to get her Punnoon, otherwise she would die in pangs of love.

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Fortunately, once Punnoon came to Bhambore with a trading caravan as its leader. The tired Bloches (Hotes or keepers of camels), fell asleep and the garden of Sassi was devastated by the camels. Consequently, by the order of Raja Adim Jam, the father of Sassi, the leader of the caravan was brought before him to compensate the loss of devastated garden. Sassi saw that person and was pleased to see the reality of her dream which she told to her father. Then Sassi and Punnoon began to live together in a palace surrounded by a beautiful garden. Love grew so much between the lover and the beloved that Punnoon refused to go back to his parents and remained at Bhambore. The rest of the caravan returned to Kecham. They informed Ali, the father of Punnoon, of the love-stricken condition of his son. Punnoon's parents and brothers were much perturbed over it. At last they decided to kidnap Punnoon from Bhambore with a trick. They wrote to Sassi's father that they would come to see Punnoon and Sassi with precious gifts for them. They came and lived with them for some days but all to win their confidence and to betray them in the end. One night they made Punnoon unconscious with an excessive intoxication of wine, while Sassi was fast asleep, as they had intrigued like this. They took up Punnoon on the back of the dromedary *(daachi)* and made off with him.

In the morning when Sassi rose, she saw the garden and palace wilderness to her in the absence of her lover Punnoon. She writhed and wept but nothing could be done to undo the done. At last she followed the footprints of the camels—far and farther in the desert with blazing particles of sand which blistered her feet. At last, thirsty and exhausted, she fell down under the burning sun and died saying, "Punnoon, Punnoon". In the jungle a shepherd saw all this. He dug a grave and buried her in it.

When Punnoon came to his senses he also cried "Sassi, Sassi" with a broken heart. The charming, royal, worldly pleasures could not bind him fast and make him forget his beloved Sassi. He also ran away from his parents in search of Sassi and perchance died near the grave of his beloved. As the story tells he was also buried by the same shepherd by the side of Sassi's grave. The Sansis of the West Punjab have a professional charm and knack to sing Dholas. A few selected Dholas of Sassi-Punnoon are translated below.[1]

1. For details one may refer to author's book *Bar de Dhole*, Hind Publishers, Amritsar, 1954.

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(I)

Bhambore is the name of the city and nearby a river flows, the name of the king who reigns there is Adim Jam.
His wife is expectant and he sent for fortune-tellers,
They came and began their astrological calculations and said,
"A daughter will be born in your house, she will either take your life or ruin your kingdom".
He said, "I will kill her at her very birth and avoid ruins".
All the courtiers gathered and said, "Firstly, she will be an innocent baby and secondly your position before God will be unsafe by killing her".
He got made a box of sandal wood and made arrangement for her disposal.

(II)

They put her in that box with the royal seals,
Her luck was harsh, and she was handed over to the waters of the river.
The name of washerman was Atta, he was fond of washing clothes early in the morning.
He saw the box and took it out of the river.
With the name of God he opened it and was astonished at the beauty of the baby.
He said to his wife, "See, God has sent for us this daughter in old age, we should bring her up forgetting all the worries".
When Sassi became two or three years old she talked sweet like parrot.
At the age of four or five she walked by the support of her elders.
At the age of six or seven she was put in a school.
At the age of eight she could read and write easily.
At the age of nine she also helped her parents in washing clothes.
At the age of ten she lived lonely and modestly.
At the age of eleven she walked in gardens,
And at the age of twelve romance entered into her head and heart.
She thought that her marriage party would come from Kecham with rows of camels,
The poet Raja Mazawar says, "The Bloches will have to suffer for the sin of killing Sassi in desert and wilderness".

(III)

The Hotes or Bloches started from Kecham when they heard that the duty at Bhambore is exempted for the river port.

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Their profession was trade and they usually remained in foreign lands.
They walked stage by stage and came far away from their mother-land,
They set their camels free for grazing and slept being fatigued of the long journey.
Their camels devastated the Lakhi garden of Sassi,
The gardener cried and complained and the soldiers brought the leader of caravan before Sassi.

(IV)

Sassi said, "Punnoon, God has brought us together out of chance and good luck.
I have seen your picture in dreams.
By caste I am pure-bred princess having large wealth and property.
But due to ill-luck I am brought up by poor and low caste parents.
Your love has murdered me like an executioner.
My dear Punnoon, never desert me and maintain the spirit of true love".

(V)

Sassi passed the night in contemplation like the prophet Musa at Kohtoor.
She said, "I have succeeded in my love by the grace of God and my sins have been exempted".
She respected Punnoon like God and talked of her as saints talk of Almighty.
She entreated, "You must remain in Bhambore. Do not leave me weeping.
O ! dromedary rider (*daachiwalia*), for God's sake never desert me".

(VI)

Sassi said, "Had I known that the Bloches will leave early in the morning,
I would have remained alert and cut the nose-strings of the camels,
Had I known his departure, I would have snatched away nose-string of his dromedary".
Sassi startled up and ran to the desert.

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Her mother advised her, "The strangers do not maintain true love,
You are on foot and will never be able to overtake the camel riders,
There are lions, snakes and leopards in the jungle, who will save you ?"
Sassi said, "My innocent mother, the lovers do not care a fig for dangers,
Those who have basked in the sun of true love (*ishq*), have no fear of the flames of hell".
Sassi ran away to the jungle saying, "Mother, do not prevent me.
I must go to Kecham, the lover and the beloved cannot live in separation".

(VII)

The mother advised Sassi, "O daughter, you do not know the ways of love,
Love plays like gamblers and the players are cheated.
Those who ride on the elephants do not care for the huts,
Love destroyed the prophets and it puzzles all the people of the world.

Love has ruined the kings who hold courts for justice.
Love has overthrown Suleman and he feeds fuel to the furnace of gram parchers.
Love placed Ibrahim on pyre but God turned cinders into flowers.
Love sold Yusuf, son of Yacoob, as a slave to the traders.
Love has surrendered Raja Bhoj and ridden on him making a horse of him.
Ranjha ruined himself after Heer and could never see his native place Hazara.

Hadnoon the king became a beggar at the door of his beloved,
Majnoon kept standing in wait of Lailan till plants grew on him and the wood-cutter gave blows with his axe, taking him to be a tree.
For love of Shirin, Farhad, the son of a king cut mountain to make a canal flow through it.
For the sake of love for Sahiban, Mirza was massacred in the jungle,
O my daughter, you will repent in the end being a loser in the game of love".
The poet Raja Mazawar says, "*Ishq* is very haughty and does not care for the humble".

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(VIII)

The name of the city is Bhambore, and nearby flows a brimful river.
Intoxication of Punnoon abated at a distance of twelve koss (18 miles) from Bhambore.
He recollected Sassi and shouted painfully, "Sassi, Sassi".
He prayed to God for forgiveness of his unintentional and unconscious betrayal to his beloved.
He left his parental home and came to jungle in search of Sassi,
He met a shepherd and enquired from him all about his wandering beloved,
The shepherd told him that he saw a beautiful and tender princess,
Shouting "Punnoon, Punnoon" and lastly "I saw her falling dead, Here is her grave".
Hearing this, Punnoon firmly believed in him,
He also madly shouted, "Sassi, Sassi" raising hue and cry,
He fell down sighing and writhing uttering finally "Sassi, Sassi" and breathed his last.
He fell near the grave of Sassi and the shepherd buried him also near his beloved.
The poet Raja Mazawar says, "This love story is related like this, The real truth is known to God alone".

Mahiya

Mahiya Balo is the most popular folk song of the Punjab. Its language is always homely, simple and sweet. It is sung in an appealing and melodious way. Its singing is also very easy. Every couplet or *tappa* depicts one idea. Every couplet consists of three parts as is clear from the following *tappa* :—

Badlo ve tusin kale ho,
Asin pardesi haan Channan,
Tusi desa wale ho.
(O clouds you are black,
we are strangers, my dear,
you are native people).

A close examination of the Punjabi *tappa* shows that the rhyme of 1st and 3rd parts are similar—*kale ho* and *wale ho* respectively. In short the following points are worth noting in the construction of a *tappa.*

1. Every *tappa* consists of three parts.

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2. The first part does not have essentially any connection with the second.
3. The second and third parts are inseparable to express the idea completely.
4. The second part is once again repeated after the recital of the third part.
5. The second part is like a blank verse but the first and the third parts are always equal in poetical measure.
6. The second part is shorter than the first and the third part by two or three beats.

It is important to note for what type of emotional expression. Mahiya originally was meant. To do this a brief notice as to its origin is necessary. Mahiya was a Kashmiri Muslim who lived at Gujranwala. He was one of the most handsome young men of his time. Balo was also extremely beautiful Hindu young girl of Gujranwala. Love does not know any caste and creed They fell in love with each other. Society did not approve of it but they were true lovers. They expressed their feelings in couplets or *tappas* usually in question-answer form, which were very candid, direct, simple and suitable for their emotional expression. They triumphed over the social barriers of their time and became true lovers. Their new form of folk-song was named Mahiya. Some people call it Mahiya-Balo also. Today there is no other folk song so popular in the Punjab as Mahiya is. Mahiya has had a variety of its themes in which it is being used as an attractive and appealing medium of communication with the masses. Mahiya is appreciated by all the ages and shades of people. All India Radio is making its great use in the day to day broadcasts of Punjabi folk-songs.

In the beginning Mahiya was meant for expression of mutual love of the lover and the beloved, as it was used by Mahiya and Balo for this purpose. But now its uses are :

(i) *As an Amorous Expression* :

(I)

A linseed lies in a salver (*thalli*)
The people mix their castes,
But we have mingled our hearts.

(II)

You are brought up with butter,
Talk to me with your sweet words,
You the crystal of sugar (*misri*)

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(III)

What is in talks,
Fear this world,
After all we have to live in it.

(IV)

The pebbles are lying on the road,
You have snatched away my ring,
You have also wrenched my finger.

(V)

Why do you take it ill ?
To press the hand of beloved,
Is a great sign of love.

(VI)

The strings are lying on a wall,
You are a raw beloved;
You have told the secret to your parents.

(VII)

Please keep yourself free from doubt.
Don't think of the past,
Forget my mistakes.

(ii) *Humorous and Satirical Use* :

The egg is white in colour,
You have gone black,
Due to cycling all the day long.

He is going on a bike,
Cursed by his fascinating drive,
He is moving his hands as well as feet.

(iii) *Religious and Mystical Use* :

Mahiya is in constant change in its day to day themes. The people of the Punjab have also made its use to express religious sentiments as the following *tappas* show :

A stick is lying on the roof,
Guru Nanak is leading,
His disciples Bala and Mardana are following him.

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I will wear dress of an Udasi (ascetic),
My dear Nanak,
How can I live in separation from you.

All the four have been accepted by Dharma,
Two sons of Guru Gobind Singh fought at Chamkaur,
Two were beheaded at Sirhind.

After the partition of the Punjab the Hindus and the Sikhs of West Punjab migrated to India. They did not leave behind only their hearth and home, they also left in the West Pakistan their sacred historic and religious places like Nankana Sahib, Sachha Sauda, Panja Sahib, and several other shrines. The Punjabis remember them in *tappas* of Mahiya, as these two show :

The tassel of pillow is broken,
O Sikh, you are being called,
By the land of Nankana Sahib.

The tape lies in the window,
Are Sachha Sauda and Panja Sahib,
Ever remembered by you ?

(iv) As Mahiya has most appealing approach to the masses, the Punjabi patriotic poets made use of this folk-song to awaken their countrymen from the sleep of slavery during the regime of the Britishers in India. The following *tappas* are given as specimen :

The wind is blowing from west.
We have to free our motherland,
Even at the cost of our lives.

We will walk on foot,
Damn the British made cloth,
We will wear khaddar.

We will get freedom,
The ropes of crucification,
Will be loved by us, as swings of heaven.

After getting freedom Mahiya has not become dry or dead. It has risen to the occasion and the new needs of society. The partition of the Punjab and exchange of population caused numerous untold difficulties and dangers to the people of the Punjab. They condemned the division of their motherland and today we find in the *tappas* of Mahiya the following sentiments :

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The parrot is looking at an orange,
Had the Indians unity,
The *Frangies* (the English) would have not been able to set our country on fire.

The masses did not know of the dangers which they had to face due to the partition of the country. They condemned its division and criticised the Indian leaders who agreed to the dividing policy of the English. The following *tappa* is representative of this sentiment of the people :—

They drowned us in spite of being the sailors of country's ship,
The dividing policy of the English had robbed.
Nehru, Gandhi and Jinnah.

After partition great rift has occurred between the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab. The consequences of disunity are well apprehended by all the intelligent and responsible persons. Today the patriotic folks say in a *tappa* of Mahiya as follows :

We cannot disunite,
The Hindus and the Sikhs are,
Like the right and the left eyes of the same individual.

(v) Mahiya has also embraced the cause of the poor with the changing economic trend and we find some *tappas* as follows :

The children are playing,
Now the tenant peasantry,
Is the owner of the fields which it ploughs.

O young maiden, be happy,
The fields of wheat are ours,
And ours will be the heaps of grain.

The trees are green and high,
The jagirdari has ended,
Accordingly, our sorrows have also ended.

(vi) Seeing so popular, homely and effective appeal of Mahiya, the State Public Relations and Community Project Departments have also made a great use of this folk song. For instance, in the Farmer's week, *mela*, celebrated at Gurdaspur on 29 March 1954, the rural folk-parties of the public relations department staged plays in which the following *tappas* of Mahiya were recited :

There are two betel leaves in the hand,
The agricultural department does a great deal of good,
To the farmers of the country.

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O farmers, you can get rid of insects,
If you get D. D. T.
And spray your crops with it.

There is a string of milk churner (*madhani*)
The seed of wheat type No. 228,
Is very useful being a late variety.

You can eradicate diseases,
If dung, waste and refuse,
Are buried in manure pits away from your houses.

Illiteracy has ruined our country,
What is the life of the person,
Who has not got necessary education ?

THAAL

A salver is called *thaal* in Punjabi. Apparently, the folk-song *thaal* does not seem to be having any connection with its name. The Punjabi folk-song *thaal* is recited and this game is played by the young girls. A century or more ago there were no rubber balls in the villages. The people used to play with *khiddo* or *khenoon* made of a ball of threads. The surface all around the ball used to be embroidered and decorated with threads of different hues. Sometimes the *khiddo* has small beautiful tassels. The girls up to the age of twelve play with *khiddo* or *khenoon* now replaced by the rubber ball (*gaind*). Some girls get together and one by one take their turn of playing *thaal*. Everyone of them in her turn gently strikes the ball on the ground and on its bump, she again strikes it with her palm to strike it again against the ground. Similarly, she goes on unless she misses to strike it rightly and the ball goes away from her rolling and hopping. Then the next girl does the same. The bumps or hops are counted and the one who scores largest number of bumps wins. Sometimes instead of counting bumps she rhythmically goes on reciting some humorous couplets along with the hops of the ball. In this case winning or losing depends upon the number of songs recited with unbroken turn of bumping of ball. These songs are called *thaal*. The question arises why the game played or the songs recited with bumping of ball are called *thaal*. The author has found the following two causes on research :

(1) Some old women (hundred years old) say that in their

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childhood they used to play *thaal* with the condition that the bumping of the ball or the *khiddo* must take place within the *thaal* or the salver. If it strikes the ground and goes out of *thaal*, the player loses the turn. So this game or the songs concerned with it were called *thaal*.

(2) Some women say that the girls used to bet for winning the game. Anyone who scored the minimum number of bumps had to feast others on a *thaal* full of *churi* (chapatis broken into small pieces and mixed in plenty of ghee). It is commonly observed that to keep up the past customs of the game of girls, usually a *khiddo* is also given in a dowry to a bride. The songs known as *thaal* are usually humorous, rough-rhymed couplets on very trivial and ridiculous topics only meant for pastime. Although the couplets are childish yet rhythm and music dance in them like the hopping ball or *khiddo*. Some of the songs of *thaal* are given below :

(I)

The crow is sitting on the roof, let me die,
Send for my friends, send for my mother,
Who has her arms decorated with bangles,
Whether she gives me coffin or not, I will even die without it,
There are jujube trees in the graveyard,
I will eat berries from them,
Here are the puppies of the bitch,
All the songs of my *thaal* are complete.

(II)

Nine, Nine, Nine, Bhabi get me barley grain parched,
Then I will eat and you should go to sleep,
Sleep on the cot in any way you like,
Nine *bhanewans* (sister's sons) are born,
One *bhanewi* (sister's daughter) is also born,
All disliked *bhanewi*,
Here are puppies of the bitch,
All the songs of my *thaal* are complete.

(III)

My father got a well sunk
Water came flowing in the water channels,
Flow, water, flow,
There are four collyrium-containers (*surmedanies*)
I put *kajjal* (lamp black) and collyrium in my eyes.

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I am waiting for somebody, I am weeping bitterly,
I wash the clothes of my father with soap,
The soap is lost,
My *bhabi* (brother's wife) let us pick up pearls,
Here are the puppies of the bitch,
All the songs of my *thaal* are complete.

(IV)

The sugarcane is lying on the roof,
My *bhabi* is slender and my brother is tall,
My *bhabi* wears *machhly* (nose-pendant),
Bhabi and I went for taking bath under the pipal tree.
The Pipal tree fell down all of a sudden,
The nose-pendant was buried under it,
Two maternal uncles of nose-pendant came,
My *jeth* (husband's elder brother) also turned up,
I invited my *jeth* and cooked lady's-fingers (*bhendi toris*),
I have beautiful sisters and brothers,
Here are the puppies of the bitch,
All the songs of my *thaal* are complete.

(V)

I began to work at the spinning wheel on my roof.
I worked for a very long time,
Suckle the small girl,
She felt the taste of the mother's milk bitter,
To such a girl give poison,
She will say the poison is sweet,
We saw the village of Jalalpur,
Two girls come from Jalalpur,
But the girl named Nand did not come,
The ankle of Nand was sprained,
Apply to it *jawain* and *hing*,
Neither it was applied by you nor by me,
Somebody's *jawai* had applied it,
The *jawai* of some damn person, the *jawai* of some cursed person,
He eats cream and drinks milk. He covers himself with a quilt,
Here are the puppies of the bitch,
All the songs of my *thaal* are complete.

(VI)

Bhabi let us go to the canal,

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I am busy I cannot go to the canal,
My brother has come after bathing,
Give him stool for sitting and ask him to take meals,
Otherwise let him do his work,
Here are the puppies of the bitch,
All the songs of my *thaal* are complete.

(VII)

There is a beautiful *sitta* (ear), dear sister,
Its grains are like diamonds,
May the brothers and sisters remain happy,
May brothers increase the lineage of the family,
My brother's wife is very beautiful,
Her forehead is decorated with a *dauni* (an ornament),
A *tikka* (an ornament) also hangs on her forehead,
My brother is loved by all,
My loving brother wears golden bracelet,
Which goldsmith has made these bangles ?
May that goldsmith remain happy,
May my parents who got it made remain happy,
Mother give some food to the black dog, in the joy of your son,
Your family, cows and buffaloes will flourish with the blessings of the black dog,
Your all the sisters will be happy over it,
Your all the seven sons will be joyful,
Then give precious gifts to your sisters.

(VIII)

O pigeon, fly to the in-laws of my brother's wife,
Bring her from where you can,
Bring her beautiful clothes also,
She gave birth to a son who is named Vazir,
Vazir is very loving and my brother distributed sweets on his birth,
He will distribute *thaals* full of *churi,*
He will give gifts to his sisters,
The sisters will bless him for the perpetuation of his family,
His mother will join the occasion of happiness,
His brothers will congratulate him,
His new-born son will make name for family,
Here are the puppies of the bitch,
All the songs of my *thaal* are complete.

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GIDHA

Gidha is the most popular folk-dance and folk-song of the Punjabi maidens, like Garba of Gujarat, Jhima of Maharashtra, Badhu of Bengal and Kajri of Uttar Pradesh. Like other provinces of India there are several folk-songs in the Punjab but Gidha comes in at any time and occasion when some young girls gather together and are in a mood to have some frolicity. In Gidha, the Punjabi girl is in her real self. Although there is no fixed time or season for Gidha yet the Punjabi girls mostly sing Gidha song along with Gidha dances at marriages or in the month of Sawan when due to rains the season is very pleasant,

In Gidha, they bring in all possible themes of life. If one wants to know true life and problems of the people of Punjab in general and those of the women folk in particular, one must study Gidha because the folk-songs constitute the real voice of people being spontaneous and unsophisticated expression of their emotions.

In Gidha, the girls stand in a circle. Anyone of them may recite some *tappa* or *boli* in a very melodious and musical way. After reciting the last part of the *boli* she begins to dance clapping her hands and at this juncture all the other girls repeat the last *tappa* several times in chorus and dance with great vigour but in an attractive rhythm. The last *tappa* is considered the main or central idea of the *boli*. Sometimes they play farces of different and interesting characters of Punjabi life. In Gidha only the women-folk can participate. Gidha dance and its songs are found in all parts of Punjab. A few *bolis* of Gidha are given below. The first one is reproduced in Punjabi itself to show its poetical construction :

1. The Punjabi girl is full of romance and irony. She remembers her husband in a very ironical way as in the following *boli* of Gidha :

Hara jandra neen rangeel jandra
Mere baap da jawai munda bara chandra.

(There is a green lock, there is a coloured lock, the son-in-law of my father is very mischievous).

2. In spite of her faithfulness to her lover she does not lose self-respect and says in Gidha :

"I was busy in my work, if you do not agree to my request, then go away, I do not care a fig for you."

3. Nowadays the people of Punjab have become more

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calculating and money-minded. In the past selling of milk was considered a slur on family but now many people sell milk and in greed of money do not give much milk even to the calf :

"The birds are flying towards Calcutta, the greedy Jat does not give sufficient milk even to the calf and milks whole of it for selling."

4. In her in-laws in spite of all attachments she does not forget the parental love and says :

"The birds are flying towards the mountain, my damsels now yearn for the affection of your parents."

5. She understands that life is a temporary and unregainable stay in this world. So timely enjoyment is necessary for it :

"The bitter gourds are lying on the cot, play and dance my life, as friends do not gather together often."

6. "Amongst all the villages the village of Mari is most famous,
There are two girls belonging to Mari,
One is fat and the other is slender,
The fat has got thin *dopatta* and the slender wears a *doria*,
She is cleaning them to make them cleaner and whiter,
Those who love him will take him away."

7. "O young boy, your bullocks are thirsty,
Take them to the flowing stream,
Loosen their ropes and let them go to take water."

8. Sometimes she is very succinct in her expression. In the following *tappa* she describes the economic condition of her family so briefly :

"Seven buffaloes are standing on the manger,
See the high earning of my brother, I have got so many golden bangles around my arms."

9. She is aware of the fact that one should not be proud of beauty as it has wings :

"O the beautiful young girl with nose-pendant,
The nose-pendant beautifies you as flowers beautify a garden,
No doubt you are laden with beauty,
But remember that it will not last long."

10. She knows the nature of woman and warns her brother to keep his wife under control and says :

"He went for earning some profit and remained there for 12 years. He brought a fan made of straw.

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Brother, you will repent, if you pamper your wife".

11. The two Great World Wars, during the English regime, had their socio-economic influence on India and particularly on the Punjab which supplied the largest number of soldiers to the British Army. The soldiers once enlisted had to remain out of India for years together fighting on foreign fronts. Accordingly, thousands of young married girls of Punjab had to face very long separation from their husbands, and some of them became widows when their husbands were killed in war. Seeing this pitiable condition, the maiden of Punjab sings in Gidha :

"My dear mother do not marry me to a *naukar* (soldier),
He will immediately run away on the orders of the Government,
He will leave me in *muklawa* (the first visit of bride to her in-law's house, after marriage)."

"My dear mother do not marry me to a *naukar* (soldier),
He will immediately run away on the orders of the Government,
On receiving orders he will leave behind even glass of milk given to him for drinking".

12. A century or so ago the means of communications were not convenient in the Punjab. Law and order was also unsafe. So long journeys were hazardous, and the parents did not marry their daughters at very distant places. If any girl was married to a remote place she expressed her feelings in the following *tappa*:

"The wind has come from the direction of Amritsar,
The leaves of tree are rustling,
God knows when the parents will meet their daughters married at distant places".

13. In the following *tappa* she expresses her feelings of having love-affair with her lover but she also realises social censure and fear of parents :

"O boy with golden necklace (*kaintha*),
The beads of your *kaintha* shine like sparks,
My heart desires to love you, but I am afraid of my parents,
I also realise my social bounds".

14. Sometimes the unwise parents do not give proper consideration to the ages of the couple. In the following *tappa* the girls express the feelings of the one who has been engaged to a man who is informed to be old :

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"The cart-drivers decorated their carts,
But your cart is old and worm-eaten,
I am informed of your old age,
Alas ! I am in the prime of my youth."

15. Contrary to the above case, sometimes the young girl is married to a child or a boy who is absolutely in maladjustment with her. This is also expressed in the following tappa :

"I have prepared chapatis for the family.
I have also prepared a *guli* (a very small chapati),
I have been taken in being married to a small child."

16. Sometimes her *tappas* are very humorous and interesting which are extremely satirical :

"A sheep is in milk in the house of barbers,
The sheep came to the house from the grazing pasture,
The barber and his wife both began to milk her holding her all the four legs,
They purchased rice for one pice and cooked them, to give feast to whole of village,
I came out of my house like a beautiful pigeon."

17. Sometimes she is very frank and humorous in getting gifts from her husband as is shown from the following tappas :

"O my dear you have purchased golden buttons,
Get me golden guts (bracelets or *gokhrus*),
Otherwise your love will break away."
"My *daranis* and *jathanis* (husband's younger brother's wife and elder brother's wife) have got golden *tilis* (a small ornament worn in nasal wing)
Get me also the same, otherwise get away from my cot."

18. She knows well that after marriage it is not good for a married girl to remain for a long time in her parental house as it is expressed by the following *boli* :

"The horse is crossing the river,
The young married girl should never be left with her parents for long".

19. The day-to-day disputes between daughter-in-law (*nohn*) and mother-in-law (*saas*) are very common in Indian society. In some dispute when she is taunted by her mother-in-law, she also replies tauntingly as is clear from the following *bolis* :

"I was cutting onions (*gandhe*),
O *saas*, I used to hear at my paternal village,
Your sons are *randas* (widowers), I have a bad luck to come to your house".

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"I was cutting leaves of onions (*bhookan*),
O *saas*, I used to hear your misdeeds (*kartootan*) at my paternal village".

20. In the following *tappas* it is clear how clever a young girl may be in maintaining and concealing her love-affair. A young girl is sitting in the attic (*chobara*) and her lover comes there and they talk. The mother who is sitting downstairs in the compound of the house hears their whisper and asks her to which she replies very wittily and adroitly:

"My daughter, the grains of gram are in my basket (*chhikoo*)
I hear you speaking but who else is whispering with you ?"
"My dear mother, there are legs (*pawe*) of my *palang*,
I am singing and the other sound is that of my spinning wheel."

21. Sometime the young girls spontaneously say something which can be ranked with the highest form of poetry as is clear from this single line :

"Where should I put *kajjal* or *surma*,
my eyes are completely filled with true love."

22. She is aware of the value of quality and is not merely proud of beauty :

"Moonlight is before moon, but trees are hiding it from the *chakor* (a bird known to be lover of moon),
Without wisdom, beauty and fair complexion are meaningless."

23. Sometimes she expresses some object in a very dramatic way as is seen from the following *tappa* :

"The barber's daughter lifts two pitchers on her head,
With a vessel of silver on them (a *garvi* of *chandi*),
Her waist is swinging as she walks with them."

24. Sometimes she cuts a very ironical joke on the modern commodities which have replaced wholesome and pure natural substances. She humorously calls vegetable ghee *mombattiyan* (wax candles) :

"Our young men are becoming weaker and weaker everyday,
Because they consume *mombattiyan* (wax candles) instead of pure ghee and butter."

25. She is deadly against artificial means of beautification and ridicules the modern cosmetics like lipstick, nail polish, rouge,

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face powder, face cream, etc. and sings in Gidha :

Gora rang dabbiyan wich aya,
kaliyan noon khabar karo.
(The fair complexion has come packed in containers, inform the black persons.)

26. The fact which the writers describe in volumes, she describes in a few words. It is well known that the English drained out the wealth of India. When they introduced coins of base metals to Indian currency instead of gold and silver coins, the Punjabi girl sang in Gidha :

Chal paye gilt de aane, raj Farangiyan da.
(The coins of base metals have come into vogue in the British regime.)

27. Now the female education is increasing day by day and the girls of Punjab are not handicapped in this respect. But she understands that merely bookish education without practical knowledge of household affairs, is of no value to the women, as it is expressed in the following *tappa* :

"The simple and plain parents are educating their girls,
They come home from the school after every eighth day,
They are coming from the canal wearing beautiful clothes,
What homework can they do who only know how to wear fashionable and gaudy dress?"

28. Sometimes her *tappas* explain the time-honoured customs of society. In the Punjab the people feel greater joy on the birth of a son than of a daughter. On the birth of a son the people spend and waste lot of money but the birth of a daughter goes unnoticed. This social belief is described in the following *tappas* :

Je tere ghar jammi dhi we Niranjana
Thora daru pi ve Niranjana
Je tere ghar jamme putt ve Niranjana
Hun daru di rutt ve Niranjana.
(O Niranjan, if a daughter is born in your house, you should not drink at all. If a son is born in your house, then you should drink and make merry to your fill.)

29. A daughter-in-law is usually happy over the death of her mother-in-law (*sass*) who always troubles her but she feels the loss of death of her father-in-law who grazes cows and buffaloes and keeps plenty of ghee in the house :

Je teri mar gai maan ve Niranjana

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Vehla kar gai thaan ve Niranjana
Je tera mar gaya pio ve Niranjana
Mehnga kar gaya ghio ve Niranjana.

(O Niranjan, if your mother has died, she has vacated our house-yard. If your father died, he has caused dearth of ghee.)

30. Wheatish colour (fair complexion) is the general racial complexion of the people of Punjab and they are proud of it. A beautiful Punjabi girl who is married to an ugly young man feels displeased at heart. The girls dancing in Gidha humorously say :

Airara, Airara, Airara ho,
Main te kanak chitti,
Munda berara ho.

(I am a grain of white wheat of pure variety. My husband seems to be a hybrid).

Berara in Punjabi means a mixture of grains of wheat, barley and gram. The word *Airara* is simply used for rhyme and is meaningless.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

"If well thou has begun, go on ; it is
the end that crowns us, not fight."
—HERRICK.

THE SANSIS OF PUNJAB are one of the most ancient people of the Indo-Aryan stock, who entered the land of the five rivers, thousands of years ago. The appellation 'Sansi' came into being many centuries after the immigration of the Aryans into India. Who knows how many tribes have appeared and disappeared on the soil of this ancient country ! This is why some writers have described Punjab as a cauldron of races.

The ancestors of Sansis were once called the 'Sursenas' and Yadu Rajputs of Mathura. From the Yadus, descended a race which was called Bhatti Rajputs. The Bhatti Rajputs flourished in Rajasthan for some centuries before the attack of Muslims and particularly prior to the invasion of Allauddin Khilji, who destroyed Chittor and expelled many Rajput tribes from Rajasthan. Most of the expelled tribes of Bhatti Rajputs wandered towards Punjab. Among those wandering tribes, there was one known as the Sansi Tribe named after its leader, 'Raja Sansmal or Sansi' about whom many legends and historical traditions are prevalent. The wandering Bhatti tribes kept roaming for a very long time. After some centuries, some of them settled in the territories of Hissar, Ferozepur, Bhatinda and some other parts of Punjab. The present families of the Rajas of Patiala, Faridkot, Nabha and Jind are the descendants of those tribes and similarly the majority of the castes of the present Jats of the Punjab belongs to that stock.

The Sansi tribe of Bhatti Rajput origin kept wandering for about five centuries. At that time the most powerful and influential persons of this tribe were Kirtu Sansi and Raja Sansi who founded the present town of Raja Sansi, near Amritsar in 1570. This town of Raja Sansi is the ancestral house of the Sindhanwalia Missal and the Great Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Excepting for these influential Sansis or the so-called Sindhan-

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walias and Shukarchakias, the other Sansis remained nomads till recent times. The settled Sansis of Raja Sansi embraced Sikhism and having acquired wealth, power and influence, they could manage to have matrimonial relations with the Jats of the Punjab, whereas their wandering caste-brothers were poor. To conceal their relation with the Hindu Sansis, the Sindhanwalias concocted some stories and they began to be called 'Jat Sansis'. But in spite of this, history could not be erased and the authorities like Sir Lepel Griffin and some others have written that the Sardars of Raja Sansi and the family of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are the descendants of the Sansi tribe as illustrated by their genealogies given in this book.

A comparative study of the gypsies of Europe and those of India shows that they belong to a common stock and even up to this day, their languages are similar, almost the same. The legends of romantic literature of the Muslims mention the presence of the Sansis in Persia, Iraq and Syria in the 11th and 12th centuries. This is clear by the life-account of Sheikh Sannan and his falling in love with a gypsy Sansi girl. The blood tests of the de-notified tribes of Northern India and those of the present gypsies of Europe also prove that racially they belong to the same ancestors. History of the European gypsies also proves that they migrated from Punjab and Rajputana to the Muslim countries and thence to Europe.

The Sansis are of medium build having average stature of 165.72 cm. The average Cephalic Index of the Sansi population studied is 75.36. 70% of them are dolichocephalic, 25% mesocephalic and 5% brachycephalic. Their average Nasal Index is 73.30. 49% of them are leptorrhine, 47% mesorrhine and 4% platyrrhine. All the persons observed have brown complexion of one shade or the other, but none has black complexion. Prognathism and epicanthic fold are universally absent among them. Mostly their hair are straight having black or dark-brown colour. 86% of them have dark-brown eyes and 14% were observed to have black eyes. Regarding their blood-groups they have O.26.7%, A.22.9%, B.42.8% and AB.8.6%. Their blood groups racially relate them to the Khatris, Aroras, Karwals, Bhatus, Jats, Rajputs and Artisan castes of Northern India. Hence the Sansis are not aborgines as they used to be described by some English writers. At present no community of the civilised world can boast of its racial purity and the Sansis have also undergone a great deal of miscegenation.

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Punjabi is one of the very old languages of Indian people. The Sansi dialect is just a variation and distortion of the Punjabi language. This also shows that the Sansis are originally the Punjabis of ancient Punjab, otherwise they would be having some separate tribal language connected with the dialects of tribal people of India. But it is not the case.

Although the present situation of the Sansis is more encouraging than before, yet it needs a lot of improvement. In the past, their main economic means were rearing sheep, goats and cattle, hunting and working as genealogists of the Jats. But now they are taking up all sorts of modern occupations from which they eke out their livelihood. Their main tendency is to become agriculturists, and they are striving every nerve to get land, and the Government is also helping them in this cause. These people have got the experience of thousands of years in breeding sheep and goats and if the Government gives them subsidies and taccavi loans, a great deal of good can be done for them and for the economy of the country. They are also working as skilled and unskilled labourers in factories and mills.

The social life of the Sansis is undergoing a very rapid change and it is being deeply affected by the non-Sansi society with which they come into contact. The repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act has undoutedly raised their status in the present Indian society, but much more is yet to be done practically.

The old beliefs and customs of the Sansis are disappearing. Some of them even ridicule their old and ancestral religious customs. The Sansis of the Punjab are formally embracing Hinduism and Sikhism but the panches and their supporters are trying their best to follow the ways of their ancestral worship though they will have to give them up in the near future.

The literacy among the Sansis is 22.3% in both the sexes and it is increasing rapidly. Although, now they are organising themselves, yet their political life is in its infancy. They are making attempts to have a share in the political set-up of the country, but their efforts are not properly organised. Internal rifts and jealousies are the greatest cause of their slow success or rather of their failure. In the past another cause for their political handicap was the Constitutional condition that they could avail themselves of certain social and political activities only if they were Hindus. The Sikh Sansis suffered a lot in this respect, though it is the Sikh Sansis of the Punjab who are more advanced and educated. This condition is now waived and they are

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entitled to all the reserved concessions. So their condition will be improved in many spheres of life.

The population statistics of India are notoriously inaccurate. It is particularly so in the case of the de-notified tribes and the Sansis are no exception to it. In India, the Sansi population is about three lakhs, out of which more than half live in the Punjab alone. Undivided Punjab had the largest population of the Sansis and Rajasthan was next to it in this respect.

I have toured different parts of India to see the social, economic, cultural and educational conditions of the Sansis. The Sansis of the Punjab are the more advanced and developed of all the other Sansis living in different parts of this country. In some parts of India, some of them are still nomads, but at least since a century or so, the Sansis of the Punjab have been leading a settled life. They do not have separate villages. They are literally scattered, usually at the rate of a family or two in a village. So this plays a great role in the disintegration of their old tribal associations and customs.

In the past, generally, a Sansi family had a house, built aloof from the rest of the village, but the Sansis usually never had close dealings with Chuhras, Chamars, Mazahbis and Bhangis, etc. As a rule they do not take food from these low castes. But this is undesirable and it must be curbed as in this way untouchability is encouraged and perpetuated.

The death-rate, the birth-rate, the sex-ratio, the rate of marriage and age of marriage of the Sansis are not different from those of the general population of the Punjab. Occupationally some of the Sansis still depend upon their hereditary work of genealogists and village functionaries but now many are going in for many other sorts of occupations.

In marriages and inter-marriages, they have certain restrictions of exogamy and endogamy. Just like the Hindus, and the Sikhs, they are bound by many social customs. The Sansis usually hate some types of work, i.e., flaying of dead animals, scavenging and dealing in leather, hides and shoes. They generally work as messengers, laagis, agricultural labourers and odd jobbers in the villages.

Their family budgets show that they have mainly seven groups of different economic standards, but it is true that they are poor people and only a few of them can be ranked among the middle class people of India.

The social organisation of the Sansis is very old and strong.

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They are divided into many sub-castes. The main two divisions of the Sansis all over India are named after their leaders Mahla and Beehdoo, the sons of Raja Sansmal. The place of women in the Sansi society is very honourable except in the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar where she is kept down. The tribal panchayat system is the greatest controlling social force of the Sansis, but now it has become demoralised and its hold is getting weaker day by day. The illiterate, selfish and partial panches have concocted many undesirable customs which are retarding the progress of the Sansi community. No welfare work can succeed among them unless the tribal panchayat system is abolished.

The Criminal Tribes Act was unique in its ugliness in the statute book of India. Nowhere else has such an Act ever been formulated in the History of World Civilisation and jurisprudence. It crushed the guilty and the innocent alike and that also not on the ground of actual commission of crime, but just for the accident of birth.

The Act did nothing much to remove crime, but on the other hand it turned many innocent people into hardened criminals and Sultana Sansi—The Robin Hood of India, was the unique product of this Act. Even during the British regime the Act was condemned by many prominent Indian leaders, jurists, lawyers, magistrates, police officers and social workers. After Indian independence it was repealed. Now the Sansis and other de-notified tribes are law-abiding citizens and can look forward to contributing much to the building of greater India.

The Sansis are famous for their bravery. We can utilise their bravery, fearlessness and determinedness for a useful purpose. The noble act of Mountstuart Elphinstone and James Outram is unforgettable in the history of administration of India. James Outram could organise the military corps of the unruly and rough Bhils of Khandesh, which proved very brave, loyal and energetic as early as the thirties of the last century. Then why cannot the de-notified tribes of Northern India, including Sansis be used today in the Indian Army ? If their energy is canalised properly, a lot of good to the defence of India can be done by them. They are born soldiers and if proper encouragement and appreciation are offered to them, they will certainly prove ideal soldiers.

The English rulers did not pay proper attention to the rehabilitation and amelioration of the de-notified tribes. But now the National Government is spending crores of rupees on the schemes undertaken for their uplift and the Sansis are also being benefited.

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Now they are free and can move anywhere in India in search of better opportunities to better their life. So, in the near future, they will surely be much improved people and occupy their due place in the Indian society.

As a conclusion some important points about their uplift are considered below :

1. The first and foremost duty of the Government should be to legally abolish the tribal panchayat system of Sansis which is outdated and outmoded. Now the panches are not serving any useful purpose. They merely oppress and exploit the poor and uneducated Sansis. They are an obstacle to the progress of the Sansis and prevent them from taking to any new, good and useful changes. They have despotic powers and are rather a menace to Sansi society. The harmful and self-made sanctions and controls, imposed on the Sansis in the districts of Gurdaspur are especially undesirable and inhumane. The law courts are now open to them and the Indian panchayat system has reached every nook and corner of India. So if the Government is seriously and sincerely desirous of assimilating these people into Indian society, the panches have to be suppressed.

2. The second imperative need of the Sansis is social educa tion in which they are particularly backward. The females of this tribe are particularly backward and averse to change. In some cases the careers of some young men are being ruined just due to the hold of females on them. They are so restricted to the home that they do not allow them to go to some far off place for better opportunities of life. If a campaign of female literacy, religious and moral instructions, is carried out systematically, a great deal of good can be accomplished. The female education is the primary social necessity of the Sansis.

3. At present some taccavi loans and subsidies for the construction of houses are being given to the Sansis without making proper surveys and study of the economic condition of the beneficiaries. In this way the funds are not properly utilised. The lottery system is not a satisfactory method to give subsidies and grants to the people. The grants for making new houses were given to some Sansis in this way and somehow or the other, some educated persons and social workers got these grants, while many deserving persons were ignored. Hence grants should be given on the ground of the actual need and economic condition of the recipients.

4. The officers and other employees now working in the Welfare Department usually lack training in social education.

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They do not properly understand the ways and the life of de-notified tribes. So much is being done in the dark. To remedy it, some educated and honest persons of a missionary spirit suitable for the job should be selected from the de-notified tribes and they should be employed in the Welfare Department. They will prove more useful than the people employed from other communities, who know nothing about the ways of life of these people.

5. The land should not be allotted haphazardly to the members of the de-notified tribes. They will make no efforts. So they will set a bad example for others whom the Government wants to rehabilitate. A good start is the beginning of success. So the families which are actually cultivators should be selected and given land.

At present in whole of the Punjab, according to the scheme 40 families of de-notified tribes are given land at the rate of five acres per family every year. In this way the Government settles 200 persons per year, if a family consists of 5 members which comprise an average family. According to the government record, the total population of all de-notified tribes in Punjab is 1,04,375 out of which 18,114 is the population of the Sansis. Therefore, the Sansis comprise 17.3% of the total population of all the de-notified tribes in the Punjab. Hence the Sansis deserve only 17.3% of land to be given to the de-notified tribes of the Punjab every year. Suppose the Government allots even 20% land to the Sansis, out of the total area, to be allotted to the de-notified tribes of Punjab, then at the present rate of the settlement of 40 families per year, 8 families of Sansis will get land. If the Government makes a target of settling 50% of the Sansis on land, then 9,057 persons make 1,811 families. So at the rate of eight families per year, the Government will be able to settle 50% of the Sansis on land in 226 years and approximately the same time will be required to settle on land 50% of the total population of de-notified tribes of Punjab. This period is nothing more than a hope of utopia as in 226 years, their population will increase manifold and tremendously. Secondly, nobody can say what will be the socio-economic and political condition of India after 226 years. If the Government settles 400 families of the de-notified tribes every year on land, even then 50% of their present population will be settled in 22½ years. The rest of the 50% will have to be absorbed in all other possible occupations. Therefore, the area of the land to be allotted to the ex-criminal tribes must be increased manifold and out of 400 families of de-notified tribes to be settled on land, 80

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families should belong to the Sansi community. Even at this rate, it will take four five year Plans to complete this work.

6. The area of five acres per family does not make an economic holding. So a family should be given at least ten acres of productive land. The jungles which are culturable should be cleared for which the members of the de-notified tribes should labour themselves. But the Government ought to help them with machinery and money for this purpose. Land should be given on the condition that the grantee gets at least an average yield as far as the natural agencies and artificial methods of cultivation permit. If a grantee proves just an easy-going and idler then within certain prescribed period the land should be allotted to some other more deserving and suitable person. The land allotted to efficient and hardworking cultivators, should be declared their property as according to the very famous economist, Arthur Young, the magic of property turns sand into gold. Sufficient aid for the purchase of bullocks, implements and other initial and necessary things should be given by the Government in cash or in kind as the situation demands. At present the Government is giving monetary help to every family which is given land at the rate of Rs. 10 to 80 for this purpose but it is too meagre to meet the initial requirements of starting a new farm.

7. For a successful agricultural scheme it is very important that the grantees who begin agriculture for the first time in life, should be taught the latest methods and technique so that from the very beginning they may become accustomed to modern agricultural methods and the use of improved implements, seeds and artificial manures. The provision of irrigation should be an indispensable facility in the land allotted to the grantees.

8. In some cases the families of Sansis have been allotted land in the villages in which they have been living since generations, as hereditary *laagis* and village functionaries of the Jats. Such a type of rehabilitation can never achieve the goal aimed at by the Social Welfare Department of the State. Human nature and the sociological impact of milieu should never be ignored in social services. The Jats who have been keeping the Sansis as serfs for generations will not easily loosen their hold on them. The Sansis will not stop begging Jats if they live where they have been living since generations. So their coming generations will not profit from the new economic sociological and psychological changes. The Sansis must be given land in distant villages

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to which they must migrate and begin life anew with changed ideas and environments. They will live in the new villages like other land-holders with honour and dignity.

9. A Sansi who is taught some trade, handicraft or industry, should be taught after filling a bond to set up his career in the trade learnt; at least for some stipulated number of years, after the completion of training. After the completion of training, he should be given enough subsidy to begin his business successfully but at present this is not being done.

10. The tribal panches have very old mutual associations. They join together to impose penalties on the Sansis even for meaningless and insignificant social acts, and thus live a parasitic life. In order to break their mutual proximity, they should not be left settled at their ancestral places and be spread and settled in different districts of the Punjab where they should be given land to cultivate so that they may work hard and earn an honest livelihood.

11. Another important problem is the settlement of these people. No separate colonies or villages of Sansis should be settled. If they are concentrated together again, their old social evils will remain intact and the blackmailing of the panches will continue unhampered. The second sociological loophole is that, in separate settlements, their former, social disabilities will not be removed. If they were formerly called criminal tribes, then in their separate colonies they will earn the name of ex-criminal tribes which stigma will again be stamped on them for centuries to come. They should be settled in such a way that the Sansis of different families of different districts are settled in each village to which they migrate and where they are settled on land and which has usual composite population of a Punjab village.

The regional class feelings are very strong among the Sansis. So a few families coming together from different districts and living amid other advanced people will surely be benefited as their mixing with the Sansis of different regions will remove their old and own regional prejudices. But to effect this, a great deal of social education is needed among them as some of them will starve rather than shift to some new locality and leave their native villages.

12. Impressionable and young age is of primary importance in the formation of a nation. The educationists are missing an important factor of socialisation. In the history books written

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in all regional languages of India, the origin of the Sansis and other de-notified tribes and their being the very blood and bones of Hindus must be prescribed. All the children will read these books. In this way, the social prejudice against the so-called de-notified tribes can be removed from the minds of the coming generations very early. The inclusion of anthropological study of the primitive tribes, in the school curricula has already been recommended and put into practice in America by the famous anthropologists, Beatty, Kennard, Young, Sterner and Macgragor. We must also follow this type of useful socialising method of education. In this way, the children of de-notified tribes themselves will develop a sense of self-respect and equality instead of the inferiority-complex from which they suffer now.

13. After reading vast literature on Indian Tribes and Castes, one finds nothing reliable about de-notified tribes of Northern India. Anthropologically and socio-ethnologically nobody has dealt with these people on scientific and detailed lines. Hence the anthropologists must pay a particular attention to their study which is very essential from sociological, anthropological and administrative point of view.

14. At present the Social Welfare Departments of the Central and State Governments, working for the uplift of these people, do not have much original, accurate and useful information about them. The departments should have a separate section of research in which the anthropologists should study the ways of the life of these people to guide the Government. The Government should lay a particular stress and financially help good writers and especially the anthropologists to write monographs on exclusive de-notified tribes.

15. The Sansi social workers and volunteers are generally poor people. So, in spite of having zeal and sincerity they cannot afford to put their heart entirely in the work of uplift of their community. They should be financially helped by the Government so that they may prove more energetic and useful to the welfare programme of the Government. They should also be helped legally against the panches who are trying their best to oppose some of the welfare programmes.

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GLOSSARY

Aahrni	The wooden pieces or dry cowdung cakes arranged in a special way while burning.
Aathri	A system of service under the Jats of the Punjab, on annual contract basis.
Akhandpath	The continuous reading and recital of the *Guru Granth Sahib* of the Sikhs, essentially to be completed within 48 hours.
Aul	After-birth.
Auladu janj	A marriage party along with all the members of the family, prevalent among the Sansis of the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar.
Baat	A tale (usually the elderly people tell tales to children at night, in the Punjab).
Badal	A decisive and irrefutable argument.
Badam	Almond.
Bagria	A native of Bikaner.
'Bai koolo'	'Be quiet'.
Bakkar mandi	The market-place where sheep and goats are sold.
Balaa	A great demoniacal and dreaded spirit.
Balhni	An earthen pot.
Balo	A legendary beloved of Punjab-romantic tale and songs.
Banni	The eloped or kidnapped woman or the price to be paid for her, price sometimes concerned with widows also.
Barwalas	A Muslim caste of Punjab, now migrated to West Pakistan.
Beri	A fruitful tree of Punjab.
Bhagoo	Accused, or one who lodges his complaint after.

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Bhabi Brother's wife.

Bhajan Hymn.

Bhanewan Sister's son.

Bhangra A famous and playful folk-dance of Punjab.

Bhanooja Sister's husband.

Bhari A bundle of something, usually of sticks, corn or fodder.

Bhatu or bhatoo A Bhatti Rajput of Bhatner in Rajasthan, but now Bhatu means a Sansi man, female is known as Bhatani. As a matter of fact *Bhatu* is a changed form of the word *Batho,* a branch of the Bhatti Rajputs.

Bhedkut A sub-caste of Sansis.

Bhutna A ghost of cremation ground.

Bid Sweets and dry fruits offered at the time of marriage by either side of relatives.

Bigar Forced and free labour.

Binda A system of Sansi tribal panchayat by which they decide the dispute undergoing water trial.

Bodi Scalp lock, a symbol of Hindus.

Bolis The couplets which are recited by the male folk-dancers while in action.

Braat Marriage party.

Bradri Caste fellows.

Budh kam sudh A belief that Wednesday is very auspicious day and it serves all the purposes.

Buks Joint-handfuls.

Chadar A sheet of cloth.

Chadar pana To marry a widow.

Chakki Hand grinding mill.

Chamarties The secluded habitation of Chamars or Chuhras in the villages of Punjab.

Chan-grahan Lunar eclipse.

Chapni A lid of an earthen pot.

Chattoo Mortar.

Chaturvarna	Four Hindu castes—Brahman, Kashatri, Vaish and Sudar.
Chauke charna	To enter the kitchen after child-birth.
Chauki	A small desk for sitting.
Chelas	The magicians who cast out evil spirits and ghosts.
Chhahwela	Breakfast or the time of breakfast.
Chhala	Finger-ring.
Chhaleda	A playful and deceptive spirit, especially of a young boy.
Chhan	A thatched cottage.
Chhana	A big cup made of bronze, particularly used in the Punjab.
Chhand	The couplets which sisters-in-law or *sallis* try to hear from the bridegroom.
Chhapri	A small pond.
Chhari	A stick.
Chhat	A bag hanging equally on either side of a pack-animal.
Chhilla	An internment for some religious or magical purpose.
Chhohara	A dry fruit, like big dates, commonly used in auspicious ceremonies, especially at the time of engagements due to which engagement in the Punjab is known as *chhohra*.
Chhota	Youngest.
Chobara	An attic.
Choori	Same as *churma*.
Chori	Theft or stealth.
Choti	*Bodi* or scalp-lock.
Chuli	A folded handful.
Churel	An evil spirit of a woman who dies in child-birth or while pregnant.
Churma	A type of food prepared from mixture of sugar, ghee and the morsels of hot chapatis.

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Dada	A respectful address to the Brahmans, the Sansis and the Mirasis by the Jats of the Punjab.
Dai	A midwife.
Dain	A witch which eats the livers of children by use of magic.
Deeva-gul hona	Extinction of a lamp or end of life.
Deeva-vatti	The ceremony of placing a burning lamp on the palm of a dying person.
Deor	A woman's husband's younger brother.
Dera	A temporary camp or a sub-caste of Sansis.
Desi	Indigenous.
Dey-danoon	A terrible demon.
Dhaman	A feast given by the parents of a male child within six months or a year after his birth.
Dhela	A small coin of the denomination of half a pice, in use in India up to British regime.
Dhianis	The married or unmarried young girls as addressed by Sansis, Brahmans and Mirasis.
Dho	The rupee given to the panches by a Sansi for initiating a *jhagra*.
Dholak	A small drum (a musical instrument).
Dholas	A famous folk song of the Punjab (sung only by men).
Dhoop	Incense.
Dhoti	A sheet tied round waist and legs.
Dihari	A day or the wages of a day's work.
Divas	Country lamps.
Doi	A country wooden ladle.
Doka	The first milk which comes from the teats of a mother after the birth of a child.
Dola	A palanquin for bride.
Dolibandi	The prohibition of using palanquin for brides.
Dopatta	The head-sheet or dress of a woman.
Farkhati	Divorce in writing.

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Gaana	The wrist cord tied round the wrist of bridegroom and bride some days before marriage.
Gaana khedna	The Untying of wrist cords of bride and bridegroom and making a fun out of it.
Gandh	A knot.
Gandhin	The fixation of the date of marriage party.
Gari	Coconut.
Gau-dan	The donation of a cow.
Gaumansana	The donation of a cow by the dying person to a Brahman or to a poor man.
Ghagras	Petticoats.
Ghar-jawai	A bridegroom who lives in the house of his parents-in-law.
Gharoli	A ceremony in which a woman brings water from a well for bathing bridegroom before starting of the marriage party.
Ghori-charana	To give a ride of mare to the bridegroom.
Ghorian	The marriage songs.
Ghotna danda	A wooden pestle to pound salt, chillies, spices, etc.
Ghund	Veil or mantle.
Gidha	A folk-dance of women of Punjab in which they sing songs and especially clap their hands.
Girvi	Mortgage.
Gode-te-behna	To sit on the knee; the youngest brother-in-law (*deor*) sits on his brother's wife's knee when she first comes to her in-laws.
Gora	Solution of water and *gur* made by the Sansis at the time of reception of marriage party.
Gotes	Sub-castes.
Gotaknala	Eating something by Sansi women of all castes from the same vessel with the bride without which she cannot become a legitimate member of her in-laws.
Gokhroo	An ornament—thick bangle of silver or gold.
Granth	A book (scripture).

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Granthi	A Sikh priest.
Grih-viheen-jatees	The destitute communities.
Guddi-gudda	A play of small girls in which they decorate a couple of dolls and in monsoon they marry them and bury them also as a belief of getting rainfall.
Gugga	A festival on which the Sansis give offerings to Gugga Pir, for praying to him for safety from bites of poisonous snakes and reptiles.
Gugga Pir	The god of snakes.
Guggal	A very pungent smelling substance.
Guli-danda	A game common in India and particularly in Punjab played by a small stick and a small piece of stick mended on either side like a pencil, known as *danda* and *guli* respectively.
Gur-tapaana	The custom of Sansis to boycott somebody or to put an end to some issue, by propitiating *gur* or molasses in the name of their ancestors, gods and goddesses.
Gurgabi	A shoe of English fashion.
Gurti	A solution of *gur*, or sugar given to the child after birth.
Haand	Hunting.
Haandi	Green herb-pot.
Haath	Rs. 60/- or seven sheep which a poor father of the bride is sanctioned to receive from his son-in-law or his parents or guardians for serving marriage party (prevalent in Sansi society and sanctioned by the Sansi panchayats).
Hari	Harvest of wheat and gram, etc. or the season in which they are harvested.
Harijan	A member of depressed classes; name given by Mahatma Gandhi.
Hawan	A sacred pit of Hindus in which they burn incense and give offerings to gods, reciting mantras.

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Hing A bad smelling substance.

Hukka A smoke-pipe.

Ikath A gathering or celebration of the death ceremony of an old person who leaves behind him a large family.

Jajman A client or the person from whom the Sansis, Brahmans and Mirasis get hereditary donations.

Jalebees A type of sweetmeat, very popular in India.

Jandi A thorny plant.

Janeo A sacred thread worn by Hindus at the time of baptism.

Janj A marriage party.

Janjbandi A custom of interdicting marriage party to eat food unless they give some money to the girls of the house or nullify *janjbandi* by reciting certain couplets.

Jawala The name of goddess whose temple is at Kangra.

Jeor Placenta.

Jeth Husband's elder brother.

Jhagra A tribal dispute.

Jharoo A broom.

Jin A mischievous Muslim spirit or ghost.

Joban The first face to face meeting of bridegroom and bride in the house of bride, when they join their foreheads, being seated on the same cot after the circumambulations are over.

Kaala-ilam Black magic or malevolent sorcery.

Kabbadi An outdoor game, very popular in Punjab.

Kabbis An evil spirit.

Kachi lassi Milk abundantly diluted in water.

Kaje Jats.

Kajjal Lamp-black mixed in *sarson* oil (mustard oil) used for putting in eyes.

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Kalaan	Half-yearly recitation of genealogy of Jats by Sansis.
Kalakh	Soot.
Kamarkassa	A belt round waist, especially of cloth.
Kamin	The village functionaries.
Kanyadan	The donation of a young girl in marriage, implying the sense of giving her hand without any bride-price.
Karaha	Pudding.
Karani	The major meals served on the day of marriage.
Karchhi	A metalled ladle.
Kath	Celebration of an old person's death.
Kauli	A small cup.
Kes	Long hair.
Keshas	Uncut long hair of Sikhs.
Khaara	Bathing of bridegroom or bride at the time of marriage.
Kharcha	Expenditure.
Kharind	Scab of a wound.
Khedna	Wagging one's head in afflatus or to play.
Kheer	Rice-milk.
Khete	Jats.
Khichri	Rice cooked with *moong*.
Khooh	A well
Khoti	She-donkey.
Kil	The first milk of mother after child-birth, or an iron-nail.
Kookna	To depose or approve.
Koondi	A mortar especially of stone.
Kothas	The houses, especially roofs.
Kuchaari	Incest.
Kujja	A small pot.
Kurmai	Betrothal or engagement.
Laag	An allowance hereditarily given to village functionaries.

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Laagis	Hereditary village functionaries.
Laagoo	The person who lodges his complaint first before the tribal panchayat.
Labh	To find.
Ladda	A horse or donkey-load or any other pack-animal.
Ladoos	A sweetmeat, in form of small sweet balls.
Lagan	A calculation by horoscope.
Lakdi	Dhoti.
Langir-wali dhoti	A dhoti tied in a certain fashion in which a skirt of the cloth is tucked behind the waist pulled from front of the pelvic girdle.
Latanwali	The name given to Jawala Devi (goddess of Kangra), for flames or *latan* which comes out of the mountain.
Laung	An ornament; a pendant of nose.
Lohri	A festival on which parched grains of maize and *gur* are distributed for the birth of a male child.
Madhani	Milk churner made of wood.
Mahiya	A legendary lover of his beloved Balo.
Maiyan	A ceremony undergone by bridegroom and bride four or five days before marriage, on which day the wrist-cord is tied to them.
Makhana	A type of sweetmeat made of only sugar.
Makhatu	A man who does not earn anything or a parasite.
Makooi	The ceremony when the bride and bridegroom put grains of wheat into each other's hands.
Mama-dan	The donation of maternal uncle at the time of *khaara*.
Mandri	A man who cures poison bites with magic and incantations.
Mangna	To engage.
Mardan-da-chhatra	The ram which a Sansi bridegroom kills at the time of the arrival of the marriage party at the house of the bride.

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Marhis	Cremation grounds.
Masaan	An extraction from the skull of a dead person, usually given as a poison to enemies.
Mathe-lagna	To see somebody face to face first of all in the morning or first of all at the time of birth.
Matia	The demon of whirlwind.
Mauli	The red and yellow threads used in different rites.
Mazahbis	The scavengers converted to Sikhism.
Mel	The friends and relatives who come to attend some auspicious ceremony.
Menhendi	Hinah, a plant whose green leaves give red colour to the skin, if applied as thick solution in water (myrtel).
Mewa	A dry fruit.
Milni	The first meeting of fathers of bridegroom and bride, at the reception of marriage party.
Misri	The slabs made of sugar.
Mithai	Sweetmeat.
Mooheen	Sub-caste.
Mudais	Clients.
Mudda	A person under the privilege of somebody else.
Mukti fauj	Salvation army.
Munda	A boy.
Munda thakna	To engage a boy.
Murki	Ear-rings.
Muth-kholni	Opening the fist.
Naana	The maternal grandfather.
Nagina	The closest relative who puts down the dying person from the cot.
Nagphani	A thorny plant.
Nai	A barber.
Naroo	Umblical cord.

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Nath A nose pendant.

Natti A small ear-ring.

Neem A tree.

Neondra The monetary contributions of relatives and friends at the time of marriage or some other similar function.

Netra A string used with a country milk churner (*madhani*).

Niwala A morsel of food.

Nohn Son's wife.

Paani dena To give water to dead ancestors or to the dead after his death during funeral rites.

Paani varna The ceremony of waving water round the head of bridegroom and bride, by the mother of bridegroom, on the return of marriage party.

Paarkh The way in which a Sansi reinitiates his already settled issues ; a type of appeal to the tribal panchayat.

Pacca than A place haunted by evil spirits.

Pagg banahni To tie turbans to the affines at the time of *kath*.

Paheli Riddle.

Pakhi A small hand-made country fan.

Parkhoos The panches or judges.

Paropi An indigenous measure of grain used in Punjab equal to half a seer.

Patila Cooking kettle.

Patti A mohala of a village, in which the descendants of the same grandfather live.

Peehri A small square cot used for sitting.

Peenghs The swings of ropes.

Phakka The grain that the Sansis of Gurdaspur and Amritsar get from the Jats at the threshing floor.

Phaljira The same as *punjiri*.

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Phansigars	Hangsmen or thugs as they were known during the British regime; now they are nowhere in India.
Pheray	Circumambulations of bridegroom and bride.
Phulkari	An indigenous sheet with embroidery.
Phull chugne	To pick up the bones of a cremated person, from extinguished cinders, three days after cremation.
Phulle	The parched grains.
Phoori	Mat or carpet spread in the Raas of Sansis where tribal dispute is settled.
Pichh	A starchy water decanted from boiled rice.
Pinda	A type of intoxicant indigenously made and used by some poor Indians ; extract of a plant.
Pittars	The souls of dead ancestors.
Plang	A very big and beautiful cot.
Plau	Boiled rice in which every grain remains separate.
Pohli	A weed with sharp spines.
Prashad	Something distributed in the name of some spirits, gods or goddesses.
Prat	A platter for kneading flour.
Pret	The spirit of a deformed person.
Pretni	The female spirit of a deformed person.
Puthi kanghi	The comb upside down with which a man touches the locks of all the women present at the funeral rite of the dead.
Raas	Sansi Panchayat, named after Raaslan, the daughter of Sansmal.
Rakasa	A demon.
Rate	Jats
Riri	Phakka, the grain which the village functionaries get from the threshing floor of Jats.
Ropna	Engagement, the word indicates continuity of ancient custom of engagement of Indo-Aryan culture, as in Sanskrit silver is known as *roopa* and at the time of engagement a rupee of silver is placed on the palm of the boy.

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Rora	A small bit of brick or stone, used for beats given to the wooden frame of a dholak.
Rori	A small piece of brick or a pebble.
Saafa	A cloth put over shoulders in a hanging way.
Saag	Green herb.
Saalis	Wife's sisters.
Saaloo	A red indigenous sheet or a *phulkari*.
Sair	The statement of the *charawas* or pleaders of appellant before tribal panchayat.
Salaami	The money which relatives and friends give to bridegroom or bride at the time of the marriage.
Samadh	A tomb of a Hindu.
Sanjog	Destiny of union, especially in marriage.
Sarbala	Ceremonial assistant of bridegroom.
Sarbali	Ceremonial assistant of bride.
Sarson	Mustard.
Sas	The mother-in-law.
Saukan	A co-wife.
Seer	The same as *siran*.
Sehra Bandi	The ceremony of tying marriage coronet to the bridegroom.
Sewadal	A voluntary corps of social sercice.
Shabad	A hymn.
Shahid	A martyr.
Shajra-e-nasab	Genealogy.
Sham-laat-deh	The common land of the village.
Sharah	The customs set by society.
Sharbat	Sweet solution of sugar, etc. in water.
Shareenh	A plant whose green leaves are tied at the door of the room where the male child is born.
Sharini	*Prashad*.
Siran	A wasteful distribution of ghee and sugar, by the Sansis of Amritsar and Gurdaspur at the time of marriages.

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Sirki	A portable thatched house.
Sithnian	The satirical marriage songs.
Sitladevi	Goddess of smallpox.
Sohagan	A wife having her husband alive and in very good terms with her.
Soohia	A spy or envoy.
Sootak	The impurity which is believed to be attached to a woman during menses and child-birth.
Stahrwan	The funeral rite of a dead after 17 days.
Sukhnan	Sacrificial prayers.
Surma	Collyrium.
Tak	The first meal of the marriage one day before its commencement, or penalty imposed by tribal panchayat.
Tappas	The points of discussion in tribal panchayat or Mahiya, a Punjabi folk-song.
Taviz	Talisman.
Tehrwan	The funeral ceremony of a dead after thirteen days.
Teldhalna	The spilling of *sarson* oil at the time of auspicious functions.
Teli	An oilman.
Teti	A small pebble, tied separately in a cloth by the panches of tribal panchayat, with every important point in discussion.
Thahrs	A place of stay, or rest or the married girls of Jats in villages of their in-laws as termed by Sansis.
Thal (Thali)	A plate.
Thatties	Chamarties or the secluded habitations of Chamars or Chuhras in the villages of Punjab.
Thootha	The last funeral ceremony of Sansis equivalent to *stahrwan.*
Thuggee	A crime rampant in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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Tindan	The small iron buckets or earthen-pots used in Persian wheel.
Toba	Diver.
Vaag	Reins.
Vaag pharai	The donation of bridegroom to his sisters when they hand over the reins of mare to him at the time of the start of marriage party.
Vaak	The reading of the holy scripture of the Sikhs opening it at random, any hymn or *shabad* on which the glance falls is called vaak.
Vahroo dhol	A battle drum.
Vakhaala paana	To display dowry at the time of giving send-off to the bride.
Valian	Ear-rings.
Vangan	Glass bangles.
Var	The person proposed for marriage.
Vari	The clothes and ornaments prepared for the bride by her in-laws.
Varna	To wave something round the head.
Vartava	A distributor, especially of food in marriage.
Vatna	A mixture of turmeric, flour and oil rubbed on the body of bride or bridegroom, at the time of marriage.
Vatnamalna	An anointment, used at the time of ceremonial baths, at marriages, etc.
Vattosatta	The marriage in which the bride-grooms take each others' sisters as wives.
Vidaigi	Farewell.
Vimukt jatian	The ex-criminal tribes.
Virt	An allowance fixed hereditarily for village functionaries.
Wara	The donation which the poor people get from the father of the bridegroom at the time of the send-off of marriage party from the house of the bride's parents.

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Zarda Palau or boiled rice in which yellow colour is put, the name is derived from Zar means gold which is yellow in colour.

Zaree A type of cloth appearing like gold or brocade.

Zira A kind of spice.

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THE SIKLIGARS OF PUNJAB

(A Gypsy Tribe)

by Sher Singh 'Sher'

THE anthropologists and sociologists call Panjab, the cauldron of races and cultures as innumerable types of mankind have been meeting and mingling together in the land of five rivers, since pre-historic times. Although the study of the people of Panjab should have received the first attention by the social scientists, yet they have not been studied systematically, scientifically and soundly. Another interesting fact is that all the gypsies of the whole of the world are believed to have originated from Punjab.

The Sikligars are a typical gypsy tribe and a very interesting people of the Punjab, It is the first study of its type in anthropology and sociology and has unearthed their peculiar customs, manners, beliefs and superstitions. The author has studied their economic life also. The book contains a very interesting and original chapter on their tribal dialect. This book will not only open a new path in the field of Indian anthropology and sociology but will also make a very important addition to the literature of socio-cultural studies in the world.

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